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STORIES OF AN OLD MAID

RELATED TO HER

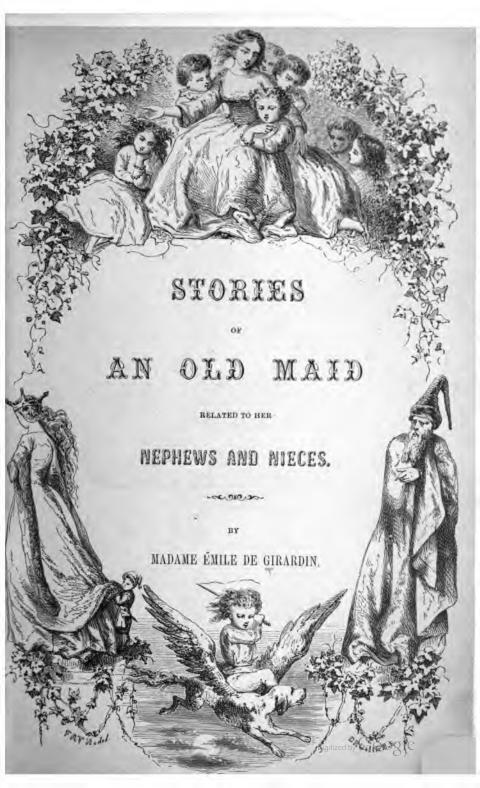
NEPHEWS AND NIECES.

LONDON

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MADAME ÉMILE DE GIRARDIN.



STORIES OF AN OLD MAID

RELATED TO HER

NEPHEWS AND NIECES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF M** ÉMILE DE GIRARDIN
BY ALFRED ELWES.

With Sirteen ,Illustrations

BY GUSTAVE DORÉ AND G. FATH.

ADDEY AND CO.
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE gentle Authoress of the following Tales has acquired for herself so wide a reputation, that her name alone is sufficient to ensure a welcome to her labours; although the pleasure which we derive from the perusal of her works must be now mingled with regret that the heart which conceived and the hand which penned such sweet fancies are still and cold.

Few writers, even among her own sex, have been more successful than herself in producing books for children: she seemed, as she herself observes, to have carried with her into maturer age vivid remembrances of her early years; and, we may add, by allowing her womanly judgment simply to temper without curbing her fancies, she has, in the following work, presented to the children of many succeeding years some of the most delightful stories that have ever been placed before them. This being the case, it is not fit that the "enfans de France" alone should enjoy the treat of their

perusal; tales like these, which awaken the fancy, excite the sympathy, and arouse the nobler feelings of the young, cannot be too widely known; and we think that the *enfans*, and the *mamans* too, of England, whilst owning a large debt of gratitude to Mme. de Girardin, will acknowledge a small share to ourselves for putting them into a shape with which they will be more familiar.

A. E.

King's Arms Yard, Moorgate Street, London.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

I BEGAN this book, my dear nephews and nieces, a good many years ago, at an age when the life of a kind old maid seemed to me an envious one; and when I had vowed that I would never marry. My future years presenting to me only the prospect of nephews and nieces, I devoted myself, in imagination, to your service; and as my own childhood had been one of pleasant recollections, I resolved to be a child again with you.

I have not altered the original title which I bestowed upon this book (although I have given up my own of old maid), because, my dears, the language which I use in relating these stories is not the language of a mother; it has none of the dignity suitable to that noble character. A mother would never dare to talk such nonsense to her children.

No, this book is only appropriate as coming from an aunt; it contains just that little insinuating moral, the timid sermon of a doubtful authority, the useless and feeble counsel of a voice which knows it will not be listened to. My timid moral hides itself smiling amid the hubbub of pleasantry; its laugh is like that of people in alarm; it is the humility of the poor, who beg, and who, in order to gain admittance, are willing even to be jeered at.

I do not say, as many do, who have written for young folks:

"I have meditated long upon the character of children; my life has been a constant study of these interesting little creatures."

I say nothing of the sort: I merely observe, I have been a child; and as nobody can deny me this advantage, I presume upon it to recall to my mind the emotions of that happy age, and speak to you as if I still were living in it.

I do not write to correct childhood at large, and guide it into a new path: I will not say to you, "The study of good books forms the heart; healthy reading nourishes the mind." I even forbid you to read my book if you are well in health: if the weather be fine, and the sun shining, you had better run about the garden, gallop upon your donkey, play with your skipping-rope, your top, your ball, your ninepins, or at blindman's buff, or hot-cockles, or battledore, or prisoner's bars, or leap-frog; or, in fact, turn to any occupation of the same kind. I do not write for children who are in strong health; the air, the open air, exercise, games, even a hard knock or two,—these are the things which help to form the heart, and to properly nourish the mind. After serious study should come noisy games; a child should

exercise his heels in running, after having worked his brain with thought. Play-hours are not the time for reading stories; play-hours are the time for play, and nothing else. This, my dear nephews and nieces, is my great moral; and, bear in mind, that I shall always be strict in insisting upon it.

But, alas! there are poor little children who cannot play;—who are confined to their beds by fever, by measles, and other sufferings; sometimes by serious accidents: who pine upon easy-chairs, prisoners through a fall, a sprain, a burn; poor little patients who are surrounded with useless toys; whose top sleeps without a snore,—for is not a hum a top's snore?—whose rockinghorse, though galloping, is still; whose lovely drum is mute. These little creatures must be beguiled, they must be amused with books; and it is for such as these that I principally write.

I picture them to myself thus sorrowful and ill, as I have often, my dear children, seen yourselves. I behold their little faces, pale and thin from sickness, brighten up as they read my pages, and smile as they listen to my foolish tales. For a moment they forget their sufferings, and bear more patiently the confinement which weighs upon them. Interested by some whimsical story, they hastily swallow the draught which they just before refused, in order that they may return the quicker to the interrupted tale; they put themselves in the position of my heroes, and forget to think of their own: when the doctor asks them of their ailments, they talk to him of

the Flying Dog; they become almost cheerful on a bed of sickness;—and their mother, who observes them smile after having seen them shed such tears, gives me her thanks, although she does not even know me; and perhaps, if she should ever meet me, would say, "Thank you; for you have procured my child a good night's rest."

This has been my object in the present work; when I wrote it, no other literary thought entered my mind.

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NOEMI;

OR,

THE CREDULOUS CHILD.

CHAPTER I.

THE GRANDMOTHER.

ONCE upon a time, in an old city in France (it might perhaps have been Paris), at the very bottom of an old street, in an old house quite black with age, there lived a disagreeable old lady, who had the care of a very little granddaughter. This poor child was very much afraid of her grandmamma, who was not at all a nice person, for every one ran away from her because of her ill-temper; she was not one of those grandmammas, like the grandmammas of our days, who often, indeed, spoil their grandchildren, and who take them out for nice walks, and give them sweets and buy them toys, -oh, no, this one was always cross and ill, who lived all alone in a gloomy room, with one old servant even more disagreeable than herself; and, to make matters worse, so sadly deaf, she could not even hear the thunder roar. The constant sight of those two suffering women, of that lonely house, that ancient furniture, those old-fashioned dresses, had made Noemi so very timid she

scarcely dared to breathe. The lovely verdure of the country had never charmed her eyes, and hardly did she know the sky was blue; for, the old lady's sight being very weak, she would not let the windows of her room be opened. The sun made her sad, she said, because she could no longer see it without pain.

Noemi never remembered to have seen any thing in her infancy which had given her pleasure: no little red shoes when she was at nurse; and now she was six years old, no pretty pink dress, which little girls are so fond of and in which they generally look so nice;—instead of this, they had muffled her up in a little old figured damask that had been worn by all the grandmothers of the family for two hundred years at least, and only some pieces of which were now remaining: the pattern was so big, that only two flowers could be got into the whole frock; these were two enormous peonies, one of which blossomed on the body before, the other on the skirt behind; while another peony had gone to make the sleeves. You may imagine the poor little thing looked frightful in such a dress. As to playthings, Noemi did not even know what they meant: so she had learnt to read in a very short time; alas! she had nobody to interrupt her in her lessons,-no little brother to play with her, no elder sister to tease her, and above all, no beautiful young mamma to love and fondle her. She was alone, always alone, looking at the fire crackle on the hearth, and the black lamp as it flared or grew gradually dim. There were good reasons, you see, for applying to her books, since her amusements were so few. But even when she did her

lessons, she was forced to study almost without speaking; her sick grandmamma could not bear the least noise; and the old master who taught her to read whispered the words in her ear, and she spelt them only with her lips. In fact, she never was a single moment at liberty, not even when she learnt to read.

But when at last she could read with ease, she did not feel inclined to do any thing else: as long as it was daylight, she read; directly the lamp was alight, she began to read again. She did not always understand what she did read,—how could she? she had seen so little; and yet it was a great delight to her to find that there were other objects in the world besides that wretched house, those two grumbling old women, and those ugly old things which were constantly round her. She would often venture to propose some question: for instance, she would ask the servant what a leopard was, or a crocodile, or a gazelle; but the cross old woman, who was not only deaf, but angry besides at being so, -- for she had been a sad gossip in her day,-always answered in a surly tone, "Be quiet, miss!" a phrase she was so fond of, that she often growled it out at a venture, and most frequently when the little girl had not said a word; Noemi thus lost altogether the real meaning of the words, and thought the old creature used them for her to leave off whatever she might be doing; so that, for instance, when she was at table, quietly eating the poor hash which had been placed before her, the old woman, thinking she had spoken, would suddenly call out, "Be quiet, miss!" at which

the poor child would drop her spoon upon the table, under the impression that she was to eat no more. Her childish fancy, having nothing to direct it, was constantly going wrong. It is a terrible thing, that quantity of false ideas which may spring up in the mind of a child who has seen nothing, but whose thoughts are busy.

Noemi's father had gone to the war; this was the reason why, having lost his wife when she was but twenty years of age, and being unable to bring up his daughter himself, he had intrusted her to her grandmamma; and this is the reason, too, why Noemi was so unhappy.

Her papa, however, having heard that she had learned to read in a fortnight, was resolved to reward her diligence by sending her some beautiful books.

He remembered those which had been given to him when he was a child himself,—those which had amused him most; and he selected, as any one else in his place would have done, such works as Blue-Beard and Tom Thumb, Jack and the Bean-Stalk and La Fontaine's Fables.

Noemi was very happy when she received this handsome present; at first she looked at the splendid binding, which was in red morocco,—she had never seen any thing like it before; then she examined all the pictures from beginning to end, one after the other, spending nearly an hour over each, and then turning back to look at them again. There were a great many things she did not understand; there were animals too, particularly, of which she had no

notion, and of which the disproportioned drawings gave her but a very poor conception: the ass, for instance, seemed to her the most terrible of beasts, with monstrous ears stuck up into the sky; while the tiger, on the contrary, she thought a pretty little creature, with its spotted skin; then the lion was in her eyes a good-tempered sort of fellow, with no harm about him; but the pigeon she considered had a very wicked look, and the butterfly, with its big wings, its staring eyes, and lengthy feelers, frightened her beyond measure.

When she had carefully studied the portraits of the different animals represented at the top of each fable and story, she read with attention all the works, and was, you may believe, highly delighted with them. As nobody took the trouble to observe the impressions which her reading excited in her mind, or to rectify them when incorrect, all the various things about which she read entered confusedly into her brain, and there fixed themselves as realities; ogres who devour children, rats that invite one another to dinner, dogs and wolves that talk about their private affairs, pumpkins which change into carriages, bears that walk in gardens, boots which stretch seven leagues at a step, and a thousand other marvels of the kind, all entered her belief without obstacle and without the least objection. The wolf of little Red Riding-Hood appeared to her the more probable, as her own grandmamma was very plain and growling, and when she had her nightcap on there were very few wolves, so Noemi thought, that could have looked uglier than she.

CHAPTER II.

A DIALOGUE WITH A DOG.

THE war at last was over, and Noemi's papa come back. He had scarcely got into an inn when he set off to fetch his little daughter, whom he had not seen for such a length of time. But the cross servant, learning his return, and anxious to get rid of the child, had meantime taken her to the inn where she thought the captain would be found.

On reaching the house, however, she was told that Noemi's father had gone out, but would be back to breakfast; so, confiding the child to the innkeeper's care, she herself at once went home again to her old mistress, who could not bear that she should quit her sight.

The innkeeper promised to look after the little girl; but he had also promised to look after the breakfast, and he liked that much better of the two, because it was his business, and he understood it.

Here, then, was Noemi left to herself for the first time in her life. She had been taken into a lower room, which had a door looking on to a garden; she looked round her, and at first dared not approach that door,—indeed, she trembled all over at the thought. By degrees, however, she got bolder. She saw some flowers growing there,—they were nasturtiums and wild poppies; she admired them for some time in silence, but with a sort of dread; at last, however, she crossed the threshold of the door, and stood actually in the garden.

At first the brilliant sunshine dazzled her, but afterwards became delightful. She felt such joy, such intense joy, it made her heart beat quickly. And then she jumped, she skipped, she ran; she did not know, indeed, exactly what she did, every thing about her seemed so lovely, and the sky appeared so very, very high.

She soon grew familiar with the various things about, though all were new to her; true, she had read a hundred times some wonderful descriptions, but she knew not one of them again. And more than that, she made many mistakes when she thought she had found them out. She was trying to gather a little convolvulus flower, the stalk of which had twisted round a gooseberry-bush, and pricked herself severely with the thorns. Instead of beginning to cry, as an ignorant little lady would have done, she smiled, and said, "O, I ought to have known that; I remember now,—these are thorns, so that's a rose!"

At some little distance from her, basking in the sun, lay a good-tempered dog, that wagged his tail each time that Noemi came near him; for, in spite of Noemi's antiquated frock, he perceived that the little old woman might very probably come and play with him. She at length perceived him, and turned pale with fright: she took him for a wolf; but he was neither more nor less than a spaniel. She soon, however, reassured herself with the thought that wolves were only found in forests, and came very rarely into towns.

The big dog was moreover so inclined to play

with the sole of her shoe, and appeared altogether to have so little ferocity about him, that Noemi ventured to open a little conversation with him; but without knowing precisely who or what he was. She therefore by degrees got near to the philosopher, who did not say to her, "Stand from out the sun;" and, assuming a very soft little voice, she inquired, "Who are you? what's your name?"

The dog, flattered at being noticed, as all dogs are, replied to this act of politeness in his usual way, and which may be rendered intelligible somewhat thus, "Wapp, wapp!"

"Wapp!" repeated the little girl, "O, that's not a pretty name; mine, now, is Noemi."

The dog lifted up his head; and as he appeared to have nothing to say against her name, the little girl changed the conversation.

"Will you come with me?" she said, as she walked up the garden. The dog, who had risen too, seeing her run, now followed her; and she was fully persuaded he had understood her, and even had replied, "Yes, if you like."

She ran about the garden for some time; but as the dog at last took to biting her frock (that ugly frock, it really well deserved it), Noemi got frightened; so she stopped.

The dog, then, seeing she was tired of play, walked gently off, and raking up a bone of his acquaintance he had left since morning on the grass, sat himself down to gnaw it at his ease, without paying any more attention to Noemi; she, however, felt inclined to continue the dialogue.



"Wapp!" repeated the little girl, "oh, that's not a pretty name; mine, now, is Noemi!"

"Will you come with me into the house?" she then inquired. The dog did not even look at her; and Noemi, growing impatient, raised her voice:

"Will you come in with me? now tell me, yes or no."

The dog never once changed his posture: it must certainly be obstinacy on master doggy's part; for as he had said "yes" a little while before, he might surely, if he pleased, say "no" now. Noemi, much angered, and already spoiled by liberty, was resolved to punish what she thought to be the sulkiness of the philosopher.

"Ah, you wont speak, eh!" she cried; "but I will force you pretty soon."

And then the little self-willed creature, but yesterday so trembling, so submissive, seized on a stick she found upon the path, and with all her strength began to beat the dog upon the back, who was far from understanding what was meant.

A servant of the inn, who was spreading some clothes to dry at no great distance, ran up to the help of the poor beast.

"I say, young lady," she cried out, "what are you hitting our dog for?"

"Because he wont answer me," said Noemi in a rage.

"Answer you!" repeated the woman with a burst of laughter, "why how stupid the child is! she thinks that dogs can talk. Well, that is good!"

Noemi, seeing she was laughed at, now walked off in great ill-humour. She strolled towards the

house, resolved to go in and rest; but the sight which met her eyes as she got near the door made her draw back in terror.

CHAPTER III.

THE OGRES.

SHE perceived through the dining-room windows certain dreadful great creatures, the like of which she had never even conceived. They were of monstrous size; their heads and breasts were covered with steel, and a long and black mane floated over their broad shoulders.

Noemi, in a sad fright, ran to hide herself under the steps behind a cistern, from which place she could hear perfectly what they were saying. Their hoarse voices were so terrible, that Noemi trembled at every word they said; but, in spite of her terror, she managed to preserve her presence of mind, and taxed her memory to discover in her books the description of some monster which bore a resemblance to those just now before her. A word uttered by the innkeeper, as he passed her in her hiding-place, suddenly enlightened her:

"Upon my faith," he grumbled,—for he seemed in a very bad humour,—"I don't know what to give those ogres to eat."

Noemi was frightened indeed.

"Then they are ogres," she thought. "O, dear! O, dear! what will become of me?"

I am sure, my dear nephews and nieces, you would not have said so; you would have said, "What fine Life-Guardsmen!" And you would have been right; for they were truly handsome young soldiers.

One of them jumped up, and, as he came out of the dining-room, he sniffed up with great satisfaction the smell which came from the kitchen close by.

"Ah, ah," he cried, "there's a smell of fresh meat!"

Noemi at these words, calling to mind the ogre in Tom Thumb, crouched closer down behind the cistern, feeling certain that the ogre would seek about to find her.

He did not, however, stop to do so, but went back into the room; and during the ogres' breakfast, which was rather a long meal, she listened attentively to what they were talking about. But with the exception of a few words, such as "yes" or "no," she did not understand any thing they were saying; there were, above all, certain loud exclamations, which escaped them from time to time as they struck their fists upon the table, that she could not at all make out, and which filled her with terror.

At last the street-door opened, and another ogre of the same kind, but who appeared to be the master of the rest, came in, and asked the inn-keeper if he had not seen a little girl enter the house with a woman-servant. The man replied,

that the little girl he was asking about had gone into the garden, but that he did not know what had become of her. As the chief ogre appeared anxious at the disappearance of the child, all the other ogres began running about the grounds, to see who should find her first.

It was of very little use for Noemi to crouch against the wall; some bit of that ugly dress of hers would stick out, so that she was soon discovered.

"Here she is, here she is, captain!" exclaimed the ugliest of the ogres, catching hold of Noemi, who tried to get away. "Help, comrades; the enemy shows fight!" Then, as Noemi struggled violently to escape, he cried out:

"What do you wriggle about for in that way, miss? are you afraid we shall eat you?"

These words confirmed Noemi in her error, so she replied:

"Not now, perhaps, because you have just had your breakfast; but by and by!—O, dear! O, dear!"

She could say no more, for her sobs almost choked her; but the soldier burst into a loud laugh, which brought all the others round them.

"Only think, captain, here's your daughter, who takes us for so many ogres!"

Noemi's papa now ran to her, and kissed and talked to her so tenderly, that she was soon relieved of her fears; he was so kind, so affectionate, this papa of hers, that it was not possible he could be an ogre; or if he were, he must be a very good ogre indeed.

CHAPTER IV.

INCREDULITY.

NOEMI travelled about for some time with her papa; she was then sent for some months to a boarding-school, and as her credulity was every where laughed at, after a little while she lost it altogether.

At school, when they wanted to tease her, they would maliciously relate how she had taken her own father for an ogre; how she had seriously tried to hold a conversation with a dog; and many other little things of the kind, which in her ignorance she had confessed to her companions: this made her come to the conclusion that credulity was ridiculous, and then she fell into the opposite error,—she began to doubt every thing, even the most positive truths; and this fresh turn, much more to be feared than the other, exposed her to many dangers, and caused her much misfortune.

At first her schoolfellows amused themselves with this fresh defect. They had laughed to see her give credence to impossible things; they laughed again when she refused to believe undoubted facts.

"If you set this cherry-stone," one of them would say to her, "a tree will spring up in its place;" or "if you shut this grub up in a box, by and by it will turn into a pretty butterfly."

Noemi at this would toss her head, and reply knowingly:

"Ah, you are trying to catch me; but don't think I shall believe such falsehoods now!"

If a grown-up person said to her, "When you are as big as I am, you will do so and so,"—"I as big as you!" she would answer, "O, no! I know very well I shall always be little: how can I ever grow bigger?" For she would not believe that people ever did grow; she thought that human beings were like birds,—men and women being a large species, while children remained always little, just as wrens are always tiny birds.

One day, some bricklayers had come to repair the garden-wall, and had dug a hole which they filled with lime.

"Be very careful, miss," they said to Noemi, who was watering some flowers close by, "not to throw any water on this lime, for you may burn yourself."

"But this is cold water," she replied laughing; "how can I burn myself with cold water?"

Quite persuaded that they were making a joke of her credulity, she gave the lime a good share of the contents of her watering-pot, and then began playing with the pieces.

But she soon was heard to utter frightful cries, for she had burnt herself severely. In spite, however, of this she was not yet corrected.

A short time afterwards her papa took her with him into Normandy, to an old mansion standing near the sea, which had just been left him by the will of a deceased relative. Noemi, who had heard mention made of this relation, who was her uncle and recently dead, asked what was meant by dying.

A little peasant-boy, who stood near when the question was put, replied:



"Why, look here, miss, it is to be like this mouse I have just killed; it's no good my shaking him, he won't move again."

The same evening Noemi came crying to her papa, and through her tears exclaimed:

"It is dead, it is dead!"

"What is dead?" he inquired, somewhat alarmed.

"My watch," said Noemi. For her watch had stopped ticking.

Few things could be more prejudicial to Noemi's character than this false turn of mind, these beliefs and these doubts, both equally misplaced. How was it possible to teach religion to this youthful soul, so foolish yet so mistrustful? how lead her to adore those sublime mysteries which she could not comprehend? For the attempt to explain a mystery is only to profane it. And then, without religion, without God, what was to become of her? without that adorable Being to address her prayers to, to sue to for consolation? Truly, poor Noemi could not be very happy.

CHAPTER V.

THE TIDE.

It is a sad truth, my dear children, to teach you; but it is certain that the only cures for our faults are the sorrows which spring from them: the heart alone corrects the head; we must suffer bit-

terly for our errors before we learn to know them, and afterwards correct them: this the story of Noemi will show you.

Her imagination, misled by ill-directed reading; her mind,—which no one had guided during its early beliefs,—after having given credence to impossible marvels, had come at last to consider in the light of fables what was told her of the prodigies of nature.

Her father almost daily warned her not to go playing on the sands by the sea at the hour when the tide came in.

"You don't know how to swim," he said; "so that if you fell into the water, what would become of you?"

"I should become a fish," she replied, quite calmly.

Her father smiled at the answer; but was not the less anxious.

One day that he was from home, Noemi set off to find the little peasant-boy who was her usual playfellow.

"I saw such pretty shells on the sand yesterday," she said to him; "get a basket, and come with me to look for them."

"Yes, miss, certainly," replied the child; "but we must come back directly, you know; before the tide comes in, mustn't we?"

They both ran down to the beach, where they remained playing for about an hour; and the basket was soon filled with shells.

"Let us go back now to the great house, miss,"

said the boy, somewhat alarmed; "it's very late, and the tide is coming in."

"How tiresome you are with your tide!" cried Noemi in a pet. "What do you mean by the tide?"

"Why, you see, miss, it's the moment when the sea, which is down there, comes right up here; it rises and rises upon the sand, till it reaches that rock; so that if any one should stop here, he would be drowned. But after that, next morning, the sea goes away again, and goes down and down until it gets to where it is now; and every day it's the same thing."

Noemi laughed heartily at this explanation.

"And do you believe all those silly things?" inquired she.

"I believe that, miss; for nothing is more true."

"Have you ever seen it?"

"No; but my mother told me so: and she always tells me not to come down here when the tide is coming up."

"Ah! she tells you that to prevent your coming on to the beach and tumbling into the water; just as they tell me that Old Bogey runs away with little girls who walk in the garden after dark; because my nurse doesn't want me to go out, or is afraid I shall catch cold. Those silly tales are invented for very little children; but that is no reason why we should believe them."

"But, miss, the tide is well known to every body."

"And isn't Old Bogey?—isn't he well known to every body? And yet have you ever seen him?

There, get along; don't believe all those stories; if you only knew how I was laughed at when I was little! And quite right too; for I believed all sorts of nonsense. I was afraid of being devoured by ogres; of being changed into a cat; I was always alarmed, when I was in a rage, lest I should see toads and snakes come out of my mouth. I believed, too—"

"O, miss," interrupted the boy in a fright, "just look!"

Noemi, on her knees, and busy with her shells, had her back to the sea.

"Let me alone!" she cried out; "what a little coward you are! I won't play with you any more."

But as she spoke she turned round her head; for she had just heard behind a singular rushing noise. What was her terror on observing that the sea was within a few paces of her feet! The basket she had filled with shells, and which she had left a little distance off, was already almost under water, while the waves came on and on with frightful rapidity.

"Let us run!" exclaimed the boy; "let us run! You see now mother was right."

The two children set off running with all the speed of fear; but their poor little steps could not go so fast as the sea, that dreadful enemy, which was following them so closely.

Their feet sank into the wet sand; their clothes, as they got wetted by the water, began to weigh them down, and they could no longer move with



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ease. Exhausted with fatigue, Noemi slipped and fell; the boy, who ran faster than she, and was already a good way before, seeing her thus, came back to help her up. And when he had done so, instead of running on again, he stopped to assist her on. He would not forsake her in the midst of danger, and save himself, as he had yet time to do.

But soon all their efforts became useless: the waves rolled swiftly in; it was no longer sand they were walking in, but water; and the waves were so large, that there was no resisting them. The children cried out together, "Help! help!"

But nobody replied. At last an old fisherman perceived them; and although it was a matter of some danger, he resolved to save them. He rushed towards them, leaping from rock to rock like a young man. He got up to Noemi just at the moment when, knocked over by the dashing water, she was losing her senses. He saved her first, because he remembered that her father had assisted him on several occasions.

When he had placed her in safety, he went back to fetch the boy. But, alas! it was too late; the waves had flown over him, and the poor child was drowned.

Noemi was so unhappy to have been the cause of this noble boy's death—the boy who had sacrificed himself for her—that her grief brought her to a bed of sickness, where she lay many months in danger.

"O, had I but listened to him," she would say,

"he would be still alive! Why did I not do as he desired me?"

And whenever the poor boy's mother came to the mansion, Noemi would run to hide herself; for the sorrow of that unhappy mother was a constant reproach to her; she could not bear to meet those eyes suffused with tears, which seemed to be ever saying to her, "What have you done with my gentle boy?"

This story teaches us, my dear children, that we must know not only how to read, but also to read well; I mean, to understand what we read. It shows us also, that we may believe without questioning what our parents and instructors tell us, for they have no interest whatever in deceiving us; but that we ought, on the contrary, to distrust the tales of authors and poets, whose business it is to invent pretty stories for our amusement.

Be distrustful, therefore, of amusing books and stories; beginning, my dear children, with those written by your aunt.

This tale, you see, finishes very unhappily; but be not alarmed, all my lessons shall not be such sad ones.



THE ISLE OF COOKS.

CHAPTER I.

THE BROTHER AND SISTER.

"No, Theresina, you shall not be a nun; I never will consent to it; I would swallow the Gulf of Naples and all its islands—Ischia, Procida, Nisida, even Capri with its big rock—rather than let you go into a convent."

"But, brother mine, what is to become of me, alone in the world,—an orphan,—without a protector?"

"And what am I?" replied Cesaro with pride; "am I not your brother? cannot I protect you?"

Theresina could not help smiling. "Poor child!" she said; "I am sixteen, and you are scarcely twelve. Besides, you know, we shall soon have to leave Naples; this palace of our unhappy father must be sold within a month; and what can we then do in this place, where we should be humiliated at every turn? Let us be reasonable; come with me to Rome; I will take the veil among the sisters of Torre de' Specchi; and you can go to our uncle's, Cardinal Z—, who will protect you."

Cesaro made no reply, but two tears ran down his pale cheeks; and he sadly followed his sister with his eyes as she glided away and with downcast head quickly passed along the picture-gallery, once so splendid, now so stripped of its treasures. These noble but ruined children could not survey without grief the empty places once occupied by the master-pieces of Raphael and Domenichino.

Their father, the Duke of San Severo, who had been long the favourite of the King of Naples, had suddenly fallen into disgrace, and died of sorrow after having wasted all his fortune. Cesaro could have suffered misery with courage, if he had been alone to bear it; but he could not patiently see Theresina, so beautiful, so proud, doing menial offices, and imposing upon herself all sorts of privations. He had passed whole nights in worrying his mind to find out some means of gaining a livelihood for both; this is why his cheeks were so pale, although he was so young and his health good. The idea of seeing his sister in a convent almost broke his heart; for he knew that Theresina was making a great sacrifice in taking the veil, since she had no inclination that way. He had nothing left in the world but her; and for her, whom he loved so much, he would have done any thing.

Taken up with these gloomy thoughts, he crossed the broad courtyard of the palace, where the grass was springing up in every direction,—that court, once so animated, so noisy, resounding with the hoofs of many horses, the rumble of splendid equipages, the active step of lacqueys in rich liveries;—that court where every thing spoke of wealth and happiness, and which, alas! was now silent and deserted.

He walked hastily down to the port of Santa Lucia, and strode along the sea-shore.

He had been there some few moments, when he perceived at a little distance from him a chubby-cheeked boy, who was seesawing in a boat with all his might, while on one of the seats a young lazzarone was stretched fast asleep.

"Wake up, wake up, boy," said Chubby-cheeks; "here are two carlini* for you; make haste, and row me to Castellamare."

"Non è l'ora (it isn't time)," replied the boy, and went to sleep again.

Then little Chubby-cheeks stamped with his foot, and grew quite red with rage.

"What is the matter, signore?" asked Cesaro.
"Why do you want to wake up the boy?"

"I want him to take me across the bay. Can you row? Here are two carlini for you."

"I don't want your carlini," said Cesaro proudly; "I know how to row, and will take you over for nothing. The son of the Duke of San Severo is not quite so ruined as not to be able to help a poor gentleman like you."

Cesaro made this reply because he had a great deal of pride; but the fact is, he was delighted to find an opportunity to have a little boating,—a pleasure he had not indulged in for some time. He therefore jumped into the skiff, sat down on the seat, put his feet on the back of the lad, who was still snoring, seized the oars, and the boat was soon at some distance from the land.

^{*} Carlini are Neapolitan coin worth about 41d. each.

CHAPTER II.

GREAT DANGER AND LITTLE SAILORS.

THE sun was bright, and the sea was sparkling with its rays. In proportion as Cesaro got further from the shore, he felt his heart the lighter; he felt such pure joy as he admired his fine country which he loved so much!

There was no other cloud in the heavens than the gray smoke which had escaped from Vesuvius; Naples and her rich amphitheatre of white palaces, descending to the very water's edge, with her terraces covered with the vine and orange-trees, looked from a distance like a colossal staircase of gardens, an immense cascade of flowers. Large vessels, with all their canvas spread, gently undulated with the swell;-it was an admirable scene, and one must have been blind or criminal not to feel happy as one gazed upon it. Cesaro, as he did so, forgot his sorrows, and, buoyed up with some vague hope, could not mistrust the goodness of God, who had created so lovely a land; so that, in spite of all his misfortunes, at that moment he felt that life was precious.

Cesaro rowed briskly on; little Chubby-cheeks admired nothing, did nothing, but every moment complained of the heat; as to the young lazzarone, he still slept on, thinking he was yet at Naples, and not even dreaming it was in his boat and with himself this voyage was taken.

Suddenly, as they got into the open sea, the

wind rose, and the waves, at first so small, began to grow: they broke upon the rocks, and rushed in and out the grottoes with a noise like thunder. Cesaro frowned, and looked on all sides with anxiety; while Chubby-cheeks grew pale.

"I'll give you ten carlini," he cried, "if you'll row me ashore! I'm frightened, I'm frightened;

I don't want to stop in this boat."

"There is no help for it," answered Cesaro, "you must stop; for if we get too near the rocks, the boat will go to pieces, and you don't give me at all the idea of a boy who knows how to swim. Patience is the only remedy; we must keep out at sea; perhaps it's only a squall, and will blow over."

Cesaro tried thus to reassure his companion; but he could not hide from himself that there was real danger. He resolved to wake up the owner of the boat, hoping he would be able to render them some assistance.

"Santa Maria!" cried the lad, as he suddenly became conscious of his position, "you have woke me too late!"

In truth, the storm grew furious, and the swollen waves rose above the boat and threatened to swamp it. Cesaro and the lad, having no longer any hope of steering the skiff, used all their efforts to bale out the water as it poured in. Little Chubby-cheeks had just been attacked with sea-sickness; fortunately, for it made him too busy about his own feelings to disturb the others in their efforts to secure their safety. Besides, all he could do was to groan, and offer money to every body: I really

believe, if he had not been so very ill, he would have offered carlini to the wind to make it go down.

Night surprised them while they were in this sad position; and the lad, losing all hope, fell on his knees, and made a vow to the Madonna if she would save him from this danger.

Cesaro prayed too, not for himself, but for Theresina; and when he thought that he should perhaps never see her again, he could not restrain his tears.

And now the boat rose rapidly on a billow steep as a mountain, then dipped into a gulf with a horrid shock. The unhappy children (for the young lazzarone was scarcely fifteen) were thus tossed about the live-long night. They clung to the sides of the frail boat, expecting every instant to be carried away by the waves: their strength began to fail them. They no longer knew in what part of the world they were; a rumbling noise, however, convinced them they were near some shore.

"We are lost!" exclaimed the lad; "we are driving on to the rocks."

But his companions did not even hear his voice; for a louder voice, that of the storm, quite drowned it. At the same moment the boat received a terrible shock, and went to pieces.

- " Santa Maria!"
- "Theresina!" the poor boys exclaimed.

CHAPTER III.

SINGULAR FANCY OF A PRINCESS.

NEXT morning the sun rose pure and radiant; and nothing would have recalled to the minds of our little travellers their misfortune of the night before but for the strange appearance of the fabulous isle on which the storm had cast them.

Cesaro, whom the surf had rolled on to the shore, remained for a long time unconscious; and indeed only recovered his senses when the increasing heat of day had almost scorched him. The young lad was already busy gathering some pieces of his boat, under the impression of being able to put the skiff again together. As to Chubbycheeks, they were forced to pat his hands for a long time, and very hard too, before he could be recovered from his fright.

- "Where are we?" he inquired, coming to himself.
- "I can't for the life of me guess," answered the lazzarone; "but all that I have seen as yet doesn't speak much in favour of the place; and if you take my advice, you'll lend a hand to build my boat again, otherwise—"
- "What!" cried Chubby-cheeks, "have we got among savages?"
- "Upon my word, I think so. Not a single fisherman to be seen; these people don't eat fish; and when folks don't eat fish—"
 - "They eat men, you mean. O, dear! O, dear!

what a fright I'm in! I'd give any man two hundred carlini who would take me back to Naples to-day!"

Then little Chubby-cheeks began to cry; for he was a great glutton, and it is a very disagreeable thing for a glutton to think that he himself is to be the dish that others are going to partake of.

Cesaro, during this conversation, had got on the top of a rock, from which he could discover the best part of the isle. The first thing which struck him, seated at some little distance on a mass of stone, was a cook, angling with rod and line quietly by the sea. This sight reassured him; and, in fact, the appearance of a cook in a desert island would be apt to strike one favourably.

"Be of good heart," he cried to his companions, the isle is inhabited: there are fishermen, and even cooks, in it."

His comrades leaped for joy at this news, and clambered up the rock to see with their own eyes.

" Santa Maria!" cried out the lad, "how funny the grass is here!"

It was natural he should be surprised; the grass of this isle was red, red as fire. They had just before them a large meadow, which looked like redhot coals.

"I won't walk on that grass," cried Chubby-cheeks, "I'm afraid! I'll give six carlini to any one who'll carry me on his back."

Cesaro, without more ado, rushed down on to the level ground; and as he walked on the red grass without burning himself, his companions followed him. While crossing the meadow to the high road, threy saw another cook, with a gun under his arm and followed by a large sporting-dog.

"It would seem," thought Cesaro, "that in this country the cooks go out themselves to procure the fish and game they have to dress."

At the same moment, raising his eyes, he observed a third cook perched up in a tree gathering plums; this confirmed him in his opinion.

But as they drew near the town, they saw coming a beautiful coach, drawn by four horses, with two little wee cooks as postillions; and inside there sat in great state a very big cook, who had a most insolent air.

This time the three travellers looked at each other with surprise, while Chubby-cheeks remarked:

"It's a poor country where cooks ride in carriages."

At length they reached the city-gates; but they had scarcely passed through the outer barrier before a tall cook, with a grave and suspicious face, came out and asked for their passport.

"We are unfortunate strangers, thrown upon this isle by shipwreck," answered Cesaro; "and claim your hospitality."

The tall cook appeared satisfied with the air of frankness and dignity which accompanied the words.

"Make haste, gentlemen," he said, "and come in here; I should be afraid of some harm happening to you if you were surprised by the police in that dress. This country has singular customs,

I'll allow; it is not a crime to be ignorant of them, but it would be folly to brave them. Follow me."

As he spoke thus, he led the children into a great hall, where the travellers were stripped; and he ordered to be brought for each of them, according to his size, a complete suit of clothes fitted for a cook.

"Queen Marmite,* who governs this country," continued the grave cook, "looks upon the art of cookery as the elementary basis of a wise government; this is why she orders all her subjects to wear this strange costume. Even strangers are compelled to adopt it; and the imprudent fellow who should refuse to submit to such law, would run the risk of being put in prison, or murdered in the streets."

Cesaro and the lad put on the clothes without a murmur; but Chubby-cheeks would not listen to the excellent reasons that had just been given him.

"I won't be a cook," he cried, striking his foot furiously on the ground; "thank Heaven, I'm rich enough not to be obliged to serve any body. I won't do kitchen-work, I won't be a cook; if I must, I will rather pay somebody to do the work for me."

It was of no use explaining to him that there was no question of making sauces, or doing any sort of kitchen-work; that the dress, being that worn by every body, meant just nothing at all; it was of no use even telling him, that the fat cook

• I have preferred keeping her Majesty's name in the original French, as being more agreeable to the ear than the corresponding words "black-pot" or "saucepan" in English.—A. E.

they had seen roll by in that beautiful coach was a member of the senate, one of the highest and richest men in the country;—he would listen to no arguments whatever, so they were forced to put him in prison.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COTTON NIGHTCAP.

CESARO was just putting the last touch to his singular toilet when he heard a great noise of drums, trumpets, and other martial instruments, which made his heart bound with pleasure; he rushed into the street, and soon got on to the city-ramparts, where all the troops were collected for a review. When there, he saw an immense assemblage of cooks crowding in the streeets; some on foot, some on horseback, and others mounted even on cannons: it was really a fine sight.

The band came first, beating with silver spoons upon copper stewpans as bright as gold; the sound produced was beautiful. The drum-majors raised in the air a splendid spit of pure gold, which looked quite as appropriate as the big cane of European drum-majors, and which they flourished round their heads in a very graceful fashion. The chief cooks, mounted on magnificent horses, then attracted all eyes,—our life-guardsmen would have been little cooks alongside of them; and I assure you that no-body, on seeing them so well armed, so proud, so

terrible, would even have dreamed of asking them for a dish of tarts.

Queen Marmite, seated on a platform, and surrounded by her female cooks-of-honour, bowed to her people most benevolently, and appeared quite satisfied with the appearance of her troops.

Cesaro observed every thing without feeling any great astonishment; he was aware that all nations differ in their customs, and moreover he remembered to have heard it said that, in a certain country not very far removed from his own, all the inhabitants were, on certain days, compelled to dress themselves as soldiers, whatever might be their taste or profession,—that on those days every citizen (except the real military themselves) was obliged to be a soldier, with gun, cartridge-box, and knapsack complete. Yes, there was no help for it; all were forced to be warriors, whether paper-hangers, shoemakers, confectioners, or pastrycooks. Cesaro therefore thought it very natural, since there was a country where confectioners mounted guard, that there should be another one where cooks practised the art of war.

Cesaro, in order the better to observe the troops file-off, had got upon a stone pillar, where, straight as a pikestaff and proud as a Scot, he examined every thing about him with attention. At first that multitude of cotton nightcaps, all of the same shape, and surmounted with the same tassel, appeared to him so uniform as to lie under the charge of monotony; but his eye soon began to seize shades of difference that would have been thought impercep-

tible; he remarked that there was a decided difference between one cotton cap and another; and at last he discovered that, by the more or less jaunty or studied way in which it was put on, a shrewd guess might be made at the character and habits of the wearer. This was the queen's secret—a secret too that not one of her ministers had been able as yet to penetrate.

Bearing in her outward person the appearance of a woman-cook, though a handsome one, this princess had the eye of an eagle; and it was quite enough for her to see a man pass by with a cotton nightcap on, to discover at once whether he were idle, or fond of drinking, brave or cowardly, stupid or sensible, a fop or a good-natured fellow. This system of observation was infallible.

If the queen perceived a cotton cap put on carelessly and all askew, "There's a good-for-nothing fellow," she would think.

But if the cap were, on the contrary, placed nattily a wee bit over the ear, "Ah!" she would think, "there's a bright intelligent lad;" and ten to one but she would confide to him some important piece of business.

They who wore their cap pushed on to the back of their heads, with the tassel dangling in their necks, were never employed by the queen; and, in fact, you might be sure they would turn out stupid creatures, with scarce three grains of sense to guide them.

The pretenders to fashion and the dandies of the country put on their cotton nightcaps in a way quite

him. When near, the chamberlain addressed him very politely in these terms:

"The queen burns to speak to you; follow me to the palace."

Cesaro obeyed.

On the road he remarked that all the horses belonging to the queen's body-guard were milk-coffee colour; this struck him. He soon perceived also, on listening to the conversation of the courtiers who rode before and beside him, that all the words they made use of were kitchen terms, and all their figures of speech were borrowed from the culinary art.

This was easy of explanation; the queen was very fond of the pleasures of the table; so that it was natural the people about the court should endeavour by their language to flatter the predominating passion.

"What dish do they mean to serve us up tomorrow at the council?" said one: this meant, "What law shall we have to discuss?"

"They are hashing some new tax," said another.

"That will be rather hard of digestion," was the reply of a third.

"Be under no alarm, gentlemen," observed a fourth, "the project did not suit her majesty's taste; she even got up like whipped cream at the very idea of squeezing her people."

This was the style of conversation at that court. The sayings which were most in fashion were: Too many cooks will spoil the broth; or, Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander; or again, He has

made a pretty kettle of fish of it; and a hundred other phrases of the same kind, which they thought would be pleasing to the queen.

The women were not behindhand in this innocent flattery; the colours and even the shape of their garments reminded one of things which were good to eat. They wore cherry-coloured bonnets trimmed with chicory; scarfs of salmon colour, apple-green, bottle-green, or orange; dresses of plum colour; and the sleeves of their dresses were called leg-of-mutton sleeves, or puffs—these were for full dress. The patterns of the morning gowns were pretty little pine-apples; the mantles were almost all of peach or chocolate: and the queen appeared grateful for these attentions.

The poets alone grumbled at this language, which they could not think of imitating, as it was not at all poetical; and which, moreover, led them into innumerable circumlocutions. For instance, if they wished in their verse to describe the colour of a cloak, they were obliged to express themselves thus:

And to the mantle of her youthful friend, The matin meal of Spanish dons did lend Its sombre hue.

Which meant that it was chocolate colour—a Spaniard's breakfast; do you think you would have guessed it?

The acrid sloe, when rais'd with care and art, Did to her brilliant scarf its dye impart,—

meant a plum-coloured scarf; so that they were forced to go back to the very origin of the plum,

recall the care with which it had been grafted, and render homage to the gardener's science;—no trifle to express in a couple of lines.

In order to describe a leg-of-mutton sleeve, they said:

The azure sleeve of the rich dress she wore To a sheep's leg a strong resemblance bore;

which was not, you will say, a very elegant mode of expressing oneself; but it only proves to you, my dear children, that the first step taken in the direction of bad taste leads us into a maze of difficulties.

The names they gave to children were not exempt from this ridiculous flattery. Here, we are accustomed to give to little girls the names of flowers,—such as Rose, Hyacinth, Narcissa; there they bestowed on them the names of fruits or vegetables,—they called them Filberta, Nutty, Almondine. It was not uncommon to meet with beautiful young ladies who were named Love-apple. The poorer women were called Carrot instead of Charlotte; country boys Lupin instead of Reuben. People were accustomed to it, and it therefore did not seem ridiculous to them at all.

Even the great surnames, far from being the names of lands or battles, were almost all derived from the kitchen. It was the same with the great dignitaries of the government: the Viscount of Stove was Kitchen Minister of State for Home Affairs; Admiral Turbot was Kitchen Minister of State for Briny Affairs; Baron Frying-pan, a German re-

fugee, was Minister for Foreign Affairs; General Larder was Minister of War; the Marquis of Pothook was Minister of Finance; and the people, who were of rather a malicious turn, and who liked a joke, were accustomed to say to one another:

"I say, when shall we hang up the Pot-hook?"
Cesaro did not at all approve of these nicknames, which would have been considered low in
any other country; but as he clearly saw that this
bad taste was quite the fashionable tone at court,
he resolved to imitate it. So that, when he was
presented to Queen Marmite, and she asked him
from what land he came, instead of answering
plainly, "I come from Naples," he replied that he
had just arrived from the country of "Maccheroni."

CHAPTER VI.

GREAT ANXIETY.

THE queen was so touched by this polite flattery, that she ordered sixty fritters of gold (this was the current coin of the kingdom) to be given him on the spot. Excellent money this was, I assure you; for these fritters were as large and almost as thick as real apple-fritters, and the largest Turkish sequins would have looked mere lozenges alongside of this coin.

Queen Marmite at the mere word of maccheroni felt an inward emotion; she had heard a great deal

of that delicious dish, and had never yet been fortunate enough to taste it.

"Child," said she in a tone of enthusiasm, "I promise you as many gold fritters as a caldron will hold, if you can manage to let me taste a dish of maccheroni."

"Nothing will be easier, great queen," answered Cesaro with extraordinary boldness, "I engage to put upon your majesty's table as good a dish of maccheroni as ever was served up at a feast of the King of the Two Sicilies: I will only beg your majesty to grant me three days, in order to procure the necessary ingredients."

"Three days," replied the queen, "will be a long time for my impatience; but be it so, I grant you these three days; go, then, and lose not an instant in setting about your work."

Cesaro was then conducted into the kitchens of the palace. As he crossed the courts, he remarked that the building had the form of a Savoy-biscuit; a circumstance which did not, however, surprise him.

Left to himself, the young duke could not help feeling some anxiety; although he had often eaten maccheroni at his father's palace, he had never dressed any, and he began to feel some alarm at the undertaking into which his boldness had led him. He regretted the having spoken so imprudently; he felt that if he did not succeed, the greatest danger threatened him. Although very young, Cesaro was already aware that the favour he had acquired had been too speedy and too great for his disgrace, if it should occur, not to be terrible indeed. The

very flattering reception he had received from Queen Marmite had already roused the jealousy of the courtiers: he knew that the whole court would be invited to taste his maccheroni, and that if the dish were a failure, he himself was lost.

These very reasonable reflections caused him singular alarm; on the other hand, the idea of acquiring at one stroke so considerable a sum filled him with delight. One half of it would suffice to supply his sister, his dear Theresina, with a dower; she would no longer be compelled to bury herself in a convent, but might marry the young Prince of Villaflora, whom she loved without daring to own it even to herself; she would, in fact, be made both rich and happy.

Theresina happy! ah, this was a sweet thought for Cesaro. Was not that every thing he had desired? The great dangers, the great labours which his ambition had so often dreamed of, were they not conceived in order to ensure Theresina's happiness? Must not events be indeed extraordinary which should enable a boy of his age to make a fortune in a single day? Well, these great events had occurred; he had been thrown by a tempest on an isle till then unknown, where a variety of strange circumstances had put it in his power to make his fortune; and should he now let so golden an opportunity escape? No, no, no, it would indeed be unpardonable folly; and he resolved that, if he had to pass those three days and three nights constantly tasting his maccheroni, without drink or sleep, he would not give up his undertaking.

CHAPTER VII.

VARIOUS CONSULTATIONS.

As soon as he had reached the last kitchen, the windows of which looked upon the street, he pretended that the dish he was to prepare, requiring the minutest attention, could only be composed in solitude; so that every one then quitted him.

Cesaro, left to himself, meditated for a long time on the nature of maccheroni; he did not precisely know whether it was a paste, a plant like rice, or a vegetable like parsneps. The difficulty appeared to him so great, that he resolved to go and consult his travelling-companions, confiding to them the danger of his position.

He was very certain to find the young lazzarone by the sea-shore; and, in fact, he had scarcely got to the beach when he perceived a little cook, who bid him good morning; it was the lad he sought.

"O, maccheroni's made of paste," he cried, as soon as Cesaro had put the question; "but now I think of it," he added, "there is some one here who can tell you all about it much better than I: just ask that stupid little Chubby-cheeks, who is the cause of all our misfortunes; his father used to sell maccheroni once upon a time; he has been brought up amongst it, and must understand more about it than I do."

Cesaro thanked his companion for the information he had given him, and offered him three of his beautiful gold pieces; for which the lad seemed very grateful.

Cesaro then set off for the prison where little Chubby-cheeks was confined. He found the poor boy in a very bad humour; for every body made game of him in prison, the prisoners themselves as well as the jailors. The truth is, he was a sad stupid; his only idea, as we have already observed, was to offer money—carlini—to every body.

Now in that country they did not even know that carlini meant money; they could not understand how a coin should be so called; and as in their language carlini meant nasty little cur-dogs, which are always barking and snapping at children's legs, you may fancy what the jailors thought when, in order to persuade them to let him go, he said to them in a whining tone:

"Please let me out, do please, and I will give you sixty carlini!"

"What should we do with your carlini!" cried the jailor bursting into a laugh, and thinking the boy meant sixty nasty little curs; "I've got a couple of bull-dogs in the yard, which will soon swallow them up if you bring them here."

The ill-taught child was much annoyed at these jokes, as you may believe. But his rage went beyond bounds when Cesaro came in and asked him seriously how to make maccheroni-paste.

"You ugly little duke without a duchy," he cried out, "so you too have come to laugh at me, and insult me about my birth. Well, I am the son of a maccheroni-baker; but what of that? I don't

care for you, although you are a duke and a marquis; for you will always have to go on foot, whilst I ride in a carriage."

"You will neither go on foot nor in a carriage either whilst you remain in prison," answered Cesaro laughing; "but I am so far from wishing to insult you about the lowness of your birth, as you suppose, that I should wish nothing better at this moment than that my father had sold maccheroni like yours. Don't be angry, but come with me," continued Cesaro; "if Queen Marmite knew that she had in her states the son of a maccheroni-baker, she would load you with favours. Come to court; the greatest honours await you there, and precisely because of your father's trade, that you are foolish enough to be ashamed of."

Little Chubby-cheeks hesitated for some moments; the idea of being presented at court was a great temptation; but the sight of Cesaro's night-cap stopped him. He knew that he could only get out of prison by dressing himself in that odious cook's dress, and he felt that he never could submit to it.

Cesaro then got from him all the necessary information about making maccheroni; but he was only able to obtain it on giving Chubby-cheeks his word that in a week he should be taken back to his own country.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW TO LEARN TO MAKE MACCHERONI.

THE whole of the next morning was taken up in kneading the paste for making the maccheroni; and after a great many unsuccessful trials, Cesaro at length managed to turn it out to his satisfaction. The third day at last arrived,—the great day, the day that was to decide so much concerning the happiness of himself and others. Cesaro felt his heart beat violently, and he called to mind his sister Theresina's image in order to give him courage.

He blew the fire with a trembling hand; he prepared with an emotion till then unknown the dangerous dish upon which his future life depended.

How many times, in his eagerness to taste his important preparation, did the poor boy burn his tongue! how much maccheroni was there not sacrificed in his experiments in this anxious struggle! some of it broken into bits, all torn and mangled, lay scattered here and there; other pieces lay floating, drowned in sauce, alas! too abundant in quantity; some, again, deprived of heat, remained upon the surface, stretched out stiff and motionless; and others, on the contrary, exposed to too much fire, were burning black and without glory at the bottom of the ruined pan; and then, all, after useless suffering, was cast hissing to the same destruction, or rather into one monster stew.

Three times were new combatants sent boldly to the fire, and three times was victory impossible. Cesaro saw with grief his reserves decreasing, and the Parmesan cheese he had procured with so much trouble frittering away: the dinner-hour drew nigh; the queen and all her court were going to judge him without appeal; he must succeed—succeed at any price.

Cesaro armed himself with courage; he pulled his cotton nightcap more over his ears; he drew within himself; he warmed his imagination with the remembrance of his earlier childhood; he recalled the delicious maccheroni he had let glide down his throat with so much gusto... he had a vision... he saw around a wondrous table, like a great banquet without guests, living forks playing with their companions at scratch-cradle with graceful maccheroni; they turned and twisted in their animated movements, and the pliant strips they held turned and twisted as they did, and yet were never broken!... the reason being that they were sufficiently done to bend without resistance, but yet not enough to break when they did bend.

This the young duke understood with marvellous instinct. The vision enlightened him; a single instant sufficed to show him all his past mistakes, and to reveal to him all his chances of correcting them; he recommenced his work with exultation, and soon the most brilliant triumph crowned his efforts with success.

Never, even at his father's palace, had more delicious maccheroni been put on the table. Cesaro was satisfied with his work, for he had done well what he had undertaken to do; still Cesaro was not easy



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in his mind. The people who were going to judge about the merit of his work were ignorant; now ignorant people are difficult to please. They order you to do things they know nothing whatever about, and then, when they get what they expressed a wish for, they are apt to say:

"What! is that all?"

And you may consider yourself lucky if they don't exclaim:

"You have made a mistake."

Cesaro saw his dish of maccheroni taken in with a feeling almost of anguish. He waited with the greatest anxiety for the queen to send for him; but the dinner passed over, the dessert was put on, coffee was served, and yet the queen never sent for him at all.

He felt inclined to ask the steward about the effect which his poor maccheroni had produced; but this his pride refused. A horrible thought rushed into his mind; he fancied that the steward had not put his dish upon table at all, out of jealousy against him, and in order to do him a bad turn; then despair took possession of his heart, and he fell into a depression which it is not difficult to conceive.

In this state he remained till ten o'clock at night without either taking food or rest, trying to explain to himself the queen's silence with regard to him, and at a loss to comprehend her caprice.

Absorbed in these reflections, he did not hear the door of the solitary kitchen softly open; he did not catch the sound of cautious steps coming directly towards him; but he shuddered through his whole frame when he suddenly felt a hand placed upon his shoulder.

He raised his head quickly; what was his surprise when, instead of a thief or a policeman, whom just then he feared as much, he recognised—guess who.... the queen!.... Queen Marmite herself, in her own person.... and in a dressing-gown!

"Great queen," he cried, as he fell upon his knees, "you! . . . in this place! . . . at this hour! . . . and for me!"

"Fear nothing," replied the queen, "I am pleased with you; it is you I am looking for, the messenger I require for the most important undertaking that queen has ever meditated. Let us not lose time: take these papers,—they contain your instructions; I already know enough of you to be assured that you are capable of executing them with fidelity."

Cesaro could scarce recover from his surprise. An ardent curiosity also tormented him; he had an intense desire to ask the queen what she thought of the maccheroni; for he could not believe the queen gave him so important a mission simply because she found it to her liking.

At length, no longer able to contain himself:

"Queen," he said in a trembling voice, "might I dare—how—the maccheroni—"

"Was excellent," the queen interrupted, seeing the trouble he was in; "and it is to that dish you owe the favour with which I honour you," she added smiling. "I am not such a glutton as my

subjects choose to think me, nor such a fool as I deign to appear to them. Agriculture was at the very lowest ebb in this country when I ascended the throne. The wheat was bad, the vegetables were juiceless, the fruit without flavour, and the vines —all but barren—produced a sorry wine without invigorating power. I made myself a glutton, and from that time forth the wheat of this country has become the whitest in the world; the wine is perhaps better than the good wines of France; the onions have become as big as codling-apples, apples big as melons, and melons themselves as big as They relate a story even upon this subject, -a story of two robbers who took refuge in a pumpkin which they had carved out like a cavern: for a long time they lived there in peace; unfortunately autumn came, and the pumpkin was gathered; then they were forced to fly, and leave behind them all their booty, which amounted, they say, to no less than two millions,—a famous treasure for the owner of the field."

As Cesaro smiled at this fable, the queen continued:

"This foolish story nevertheless hides a rational moral; for if there is little probability in robbers inhabiting a pumpkin, it is certain that land properly cultivated yields treasures. This is why I have become a glutton.

"All this proves to you," the queen continued, smiling in her turn, "that the defects of kings have sometimes their advantages, and that what is desirable in a monarch is—not perfection, which is im-

possible,—it is a defect which shall be profitable to the country."

Cesaro, seeing that the queen was in a jocose humour, grew bolder, and therefore ventured to observe:

"Queen, I am sorry that your majesty is not a glutton."

"Why?" inquired the queen.

"Because if I had known it, I should not have spent three days and three nights in making that unfortunate maccheroni."

The queen laughed graciously.

"You would have been very wrong, then," she replied: "I tasted it, and I repeat I found it extremely good. It is that, indeed, which has taught me your worth, and given me confidence in you."

Cesaro raised his brows with surprise, as this speech was quite unintelligible to him:

"How is it possible," he thought, "that maccheroni can inspire so much esteem?"

"Yes," the queen continued, "that maccheroni sufficed to unveil to me your character. In the first place, it proved to me that you possessed a good share of common sense, since you, Duke of San Severo, Marquis della Cava, son of a favourite of the King of Naples, so willingly resolved to make and dress it; secondly, it proved to me that you were bold and enterprising, since you engaged to serve it up dressed on my table without even knowing what maccheroni really was; finally, it proved to me that you were patient, full of perseverance and intelligence, since, without ever having seen it

prepared, you managed to serve up a dish of it as nice, as delicate as the best cook in France could have succeeded in doing."

Cesaro was indeed flattered at this explanation.

"The hour is near," said the queen; "proceed to the harbour, a vessel there awaits you; hasten on board, and go, for the wind is favourable."

Cesaro would very much have wished to know if the queen would keep her promise; if that large sum he intended for Theresina's dower would be bestowed on him, but he dared not put any question to her majesty on such a subject; the young duke felt how out of place it would be to ask for his salary as a cook, when he was about to act on the footing of an ambassador.

Queen Marmite, who had a keen wit, guessed all this, and only liked him the better for his discretion.

"Child," said she, "before we part, have you no favour to ask of me?"

"A great one," answered Cesaro; "but I dare scarce express it."

"Speak," she said.

The queen imagined he was about to claim his reward, and the thought somewhat displeased her; she was, however, agreeably surprised when Cesaro continued:

"Your majesty, there are two of my travelling-companions who pine unknown in this isle. Would your majesty permit me to take them back to their own country?"

"They are already embarked on board your

ship," the queen answered with a smile; "I have no wish for two such idle fellows in my states. Adieu," she added, tendering him her hand: "I should be sorry to part with you, if I did not think you would be more useful to my interests in your own country than in mine. It is with your own king you are called upon to serve me; now go, and remember I trust in you."

At these words the queen, having permitted Cesaro again to kiss her hand, retired.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RETURN.

THE young Duke of San Severo hastened to the harbour, reflecting on the singularity of his adventure. His vessel set sail the same evening, and he passed the whole night in examining the papers which the queen had confided to him, and which were of the highest importance.

It was only the next morning, when daylight came, that he discovered the countless riches with which the queen had loaded his ship: there were enormous cases filled with gold *fritters*, the most precious stuffs, the rarest fruits, the most delicious wines; she had spared nothing to render the voyage a pleasant one. Cesaro then applauded his own delicacy, when he thought that it had been appreciated by so generous a mind.

During the voyage he wrote to his sister Theresina, in order to give her the earliest tidings of his fate; for she was not the first person he must see on arriving at Naples. Duty must ever go before the affections; this is why Cesaro, directly he set foot on the beloved shores of Naples, proceeded straightway to the king, and gave orders that the letter he had prepared should be conveyed to his sister, when he would much rather have run thither instantly himself.

The important mission with which Cesaro was charged has never been made known; but it is reasonable to believe that he acquitted himself therein with rare sagacity, since, from that day forth, the king conceived an affection for him, and bestowed on him all the favour which his father, the Duke of San Severo, had so long enjoyed.

Cesaro remained some hours in conference with the king; at length he was free, and his heart beat violently as he thought of once again embracing Theresina.

As he was descending the palace-steps he met the Prince of Villaflora, that charming young man, whom he knew to be so fondly loved by his sister; instead of turning haughtily aside, which was his usual mode on meeting him, he went towards him with cordiality, and even begged him to bear him company to his sister's. On the way, he related a portion of his adventures, which strangely surprised the young prince.

Scarce had Cesaro crossed the threshold of their palace, when Theresina rushed into his arms. O!



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This old man was not a confectioner ...

THE METAMORPHOSIS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SORCERER.

"HADZINN A POUN! HADZINN A POUN!" HADZINN A POUN!"

These magic words were uttered in a terrible voice, one winter's evening, by an old man with a gloomy and malevolent face. He wore on his head a black silk pointed cap. Seated before a great stove of singular shape, he was carefully holding the handle of an enormous stewpan, in which something very extraordinary was bubbling.

This old man was not a confectioner, and they were not at all nice things that he was watching with so much care; it was not even broth or porridge, that some old gentlemen can make so nicely.

It was not paste, it was not potatoes; it was something a great deal stranger than all these, I can assure you, and which I must tell you, because you could never guess it if you were to try.

This old man was a sorcerer: now a sorcerer, my dear children, is a learned man, but a wicked learned man, a man who uses science to do evil; whilst, on the contrary, good learned men use it to do good, and devote their whole lives to useful discoveries, and to ameliorate the condition of mankind.

This sorcerer had somewhere read that another sorcerer like himself had succeeded by dint of witch-craft in composing a man with earth, bones, and ashes, and had been able to animate the figure by pronouncing some magic words. He had therefore set to work to imitate his fellow-sorcerer; but what he wanted to compose was not a man, but a woman, and he had begun to hope a good deal of success in his undertaking.

It was already seventy-three days seventy-three nights thirteen minutes and thirteen seconds that the wonderful stewpan had been upon the stove, and he had already obtained rather fortunate results.

At each new boiling the sorcerer made satisfactory progress; the twenty-first day he had taken the pan off the fire, put it on the ground, pronounced the magic words:

"HADZINN A POUN!

HADZINN A POUN!"

and was delighted to see a pretty little mouse jump out of the stewpan and run all about the room; he soon caught it again, plunged it back into the pan, and placed the whole once more over the fire.

Some days after, he made a second experiment, and that time it was an owl which came out of the pan; a few days after he saw a polecat:

"Good," thought he, "I'm drawing near; I am making great progress; in a couple of days I shall succeed in producing a snake, then a cat, and at

last a woman. I'm drawing near, I'm drawing near." And he rubbed his hands with pleasure.

Observe, that he was a sorcerer, and that a sorcerer could only wish to create a naughty woman; otherwise he would have begun by making a bee, then a swallow, then a dove, then a leveret, then a gazelle, and then finally a good and sweet little girl. This is what a good learned man would have done.

The old man stirred the mixture in his stewpan round and round the whole night with a gold spoon, at the end of which was a silver hand which had little rings on the fingers that were sparkling with precious stones. He stirred and stirred so much, that, exhausted by fatigue, when daylight came he sank back in his great arm-chair and fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER II.

THE LILAC FROCK.

On the same day, at the same hour, a little girl who lived next door just woke up.

"Nurse," said she, "it will be a fine day today; I won't put on my old black frock, but that pretty lilac one my aunt gave me."

"Your lilac frock, miss," said Rosalie, "is not ironed yet; I wasn't able to wash it before yesterday."

"Very well, iron it this morning," answered Zoe, in a haughty tone.

"I can't, miss, it's impossible; there isn't a bit of fire as yet in the whole house."

"Stuff!" cried the wilful little girl, "you have always good reasons for not doing what you are asked."

As she said this, Zoe got up; and having dressed, went down into the yard. She perceived the reflection of some fire in the sorcerer's great chimney just opposite, he having been forced to put his door a little way open to prevent being stifled by the great quantity of charcoal he had been burning.

Zoe was a bold little thing, who cared for nothing; she didn't stop to inquire whether what she did was right, provided her whims were gratified. She crossed, without being seen, the broad court-yard which separated her own house from the sorcerer's, jumped lightly over a gutter which ran between, and which she had been forbidden ever to go near alone, and rashly ventured into the mysterious laboratory.

At the sight of the old man, so grim and motionless, she suddenly drew back quite frightened; for he had a very wicked look, although he was fast asleep and so tired. But her fear soon passed away, and Zoe approached the chimney; there was only fire in the stove, so that, in order to get a little red-hot charcoal, she was forced to push the stewpan that covered it a little on one side: this Zoe did very cleverly. She had a shovel in her hand, and, although she had been likewise forbidden ever

to touch the fire, she made all the haste she could to fill it with live coal, trying meanwhile to make as little noise as possible.

She trembled for fear of waking the sorcerer; she scarcely dared to breathe; something whispered to her that what she was doing was very dangerous; she started at the least noise; still, her desire to wear her beautiful lilac frock that very morning, when several of her little friends were coming to visit her mamma on her birthday, and the idea of showing herself to them more smartly dressed than ever, helped to overcome all her fears. This little Zoe was such a vain young thing; and it had been often told her that her vanity would one day bring her into some mischief.

After having pulled out as much fire as her shovel would hold, and put back very softly on the stove the sorcerer's tongs, Zoe was preparing to creep away, when suddenly she saw in the magic stewpan two great eyes staring at her with intensity.

Her fright was so great, that in spite of herself she uttered a scream, and let the shovel fall out of her hand. At the same instant the sorcerer awoke.

CHAPTER III.

THE METAMORPHOSIS.

A PERSON must have passed whole years over any work, over a train of thought, in order to under-

stand the importance which a man attaches to his labours, a painter to his picture, a poet to an idea, a learned man to a discovery. Children never seem to know this; they only attach importance to a doll, and they break that almost as soon as they possess it. They cannot comprehend how it is that upon a thing which appears to them so ugly may sometimes depend the glory, the fortune, the very happiness of a man, who naturally attaches to it therefore a great value. Well-educated children ought to know this, and to learn while very young to respect what they do not even understand.

Zoe, when she pushed that stewpan off the fire, was very far from thinking that, by depriving it for a single moment of the heat, she had rendered the sorcerer's labour impossible; and that all the trouble that he had been giving himself for so many months, in order to keep up that fire at an equal and continual heat, was as completely lost as if he had never done any thing at all: it was in vain that he had hunted out all the treasures of science; in vain had he watched night and day to attain a marvellous discovery,-all this had now become useless; he must begin all over again from the very first experiment, and that too at the very moment of success. Just imagine, then, the sorcerer's despair when he suddenly saw all his future prospects destroyed, his work quite gone. He turned pale with rage, he actually wept as only a sorcerer can weep; tears, black tears ran from his eyes, and fell upon the white stone in two spots of ink; his hands looked like claws in his fury. He could not

at first speak; he sought in his memory for the most terrible imprecations, the most powerful maledictions, in order to overwhelm the unhappy child, who had thrown herself on her knees before him, and held up her trembling hands in supplication.

Suddenly, with his brain in a whirl, and as if seized with an inspiration of vengeance, he caught hold of the fatal stewpan from which the two great eyes were still staring, and threw the whole of its contents into the face of poor Zoe, who, letting her head drop upon her bosom, swooned away with the fright.

The sorcerer, running several times round her, then pronounced the magic words:

"HADZINN A POUN!

HADZINN A POUN!"

And Zoe was soon Zoe no longer: her pretty little hands were changed into paws with long talons; her large eyes so soft and blue became two big round green ones; her golden hair was soon nothing but a thick fur; in fact, that Zoe, just now so graceful, so proud of her beauty, was changed into a big awkward cat, not even to be admired as a cat.

When poor Zoe came to herself, and understood her metamorphosis, her heart felt sad indeed. She wished to speak, to speak with that sweet voice which her good mother could so seldom resist; alas! she had no voice left: she mewed, but she mewed unnaturally; for the sorcerer, who had never made a cat before, had not been able to give her a proper voice like that of true cats, so that her sad complainings were without softness.

You will remember that his last trial was to be a cat before he reached a woman, and this attempt at a cat was sufficient to cause very little regret for the woman who was to come after her; it was probable she would have been very clumsily put together, and that her voice would have had very little charm about it.

With regard to poor little Zoe's, it seemed more like the creaking of a door than the mewing of a cat; and the sorcerer felt no pleasure at hearing that cracked and plaintive voice which did him so little honour.

While Zoe was thus groaning, she heard her nurse calling her in the court:

"Zoe! Zoe!" resounded on all sides; then the poor child grew strangely agitated, and leapt about the room with terrible eagerness.

"Ha, ha!" cried the wicked sorcerer, with a shocking laugh, "they are calling you, my pretty little cat; go, go; your mother will be very proud to see you in such a dress; there, be off with you; show her your new frock. It worries you a little at first, no doubt; but you must manage to get used to it, for I warn you, you shall never return to your natural shape till some one shall say to you,—'Zoe, I forgive you;' and certainly, you wretched little girl, it will not be I."

As he said these words, the sorcerer gave the big cat a kick, and sent her flying into the court, where she remained a moment as if stunned.

CHAPTER IV.

SOME PROPLE DO NOT LIKE CATS.

"Zoe! Zoe! breakfast is ready!"

"Miss Zoe, my mistress is calling you!"

"Have you seen Miss Zoe, Mr. Pechar?" inquired the chambermaid of the porter.

"No, ma'am, we have not seen her yet to-day."

"Zoe! Zoe!"

And Zoe ran up the stairs, and came each time she was called; she was just going into the diningroom, when her nurse trod on her paw, and cried out:

"O, dear me! whose ugly great cat is this? will you go away, you nasty thing? I don't like cats; there's nothing I hate so much as a cat. Pss! bah! be off with you!"

And poor Zoe was forced to go away.

As she was sadly creeping down the staircase, her little cousin came out of the dining-room, holding an immense slice of cake in his hand; it was his part of the breakfast, and he had come out to look for his cousin, to tell her to come and get hers.

"Zoe! Zoe!" he called out; "cousin, come to your breakfast; there's such nice cake!"

Zoe, quite forgetting that she was changed into a cat, ran up to her cousin, and tried to lay hold of the slice he held in his hand; but the little glutton screamed out as if he were burnt:

"Mamma! mamma! here's a big cat wants to steal my cake!"

The unhappy cat was again forced to run away sadly, very sadly, without her breakfast. She went to take refuge in her room, and jumped into her own bed, hoping she would remain there in safety. But scarcely had she crept in than her nurse returned. She brought with her the lilac dress, quite fresh and nicely ironed,—that fatal dress which was the cause of all her misfortunes.

"Zoe," said the nurse, "come Miss Zoe, don't be sulky; come and have your dress on, it's quite ready: come."

Rosalie looked for the little girl behind the door, in every corner, imagining that she was hiding herself; as she went on looking and calling on every side, she put the different things straight that were scattered about the room, and then began to draw the curtains in order to make the bed; as she took off the coverlet, she perceived the big cat; then she called out and made a terrible noise:

"Here you are again, you nasty creature!" she cried. "What are you doing here? will you go away?" and the exclamations of disgust recommenced, accompanied with sundry kicks and blows from the handle of the broom.

Zoe, quite frightened, ran away again as fast as possible; and as soon as she got out of reach of the blows of that terrible Rosalie, she went to crouch down at her mother's door and wait her appearance with resignation.

"In spite of my sad metamorphosis," she thought, "mamma at least will recognise me; O, I am quite sure she will; she will guess who I am, she will un-

derstand me,—she who understood me so well before I could speak a word. If I might only remain alongside of her, she loves me so much, she would prevent any body hurting me."

CHAPTER V.

A SAD PARTY.

WHILE Zoe was crouching trembling at that door, she saw her two little cousins come in, very nicely dressed and very pretty, walking on the tips of their toes, and each holding a large nosegay in her little hands.

"Aunt is not yet up," they said; "we have come to see her on her birthday. But where is Zoe? we want her to put our nosegays in water."

"Miss Zoe must be in her own room," replied the footman, not knowing any thing of what had occurred.

"Ah, I dare say," cried the elder of the two little girls,—"I dare say she is still working at her pincushion; I was quite sure it would not be ready for aunt's birthday; the sleeves I have worked for her were finished a week ago."

As she spoke the little girl displayed a pretty pair of sleeves which she had embroidered herself, and that she intended as a present for her aunt. Zoe saw all these things, these presents, these nosegays, and her poor heart was almost breaking. It

was not that she was behindhand in her own preparations for this day,—alas! her pincushion and her nosegay were quite ready the evening before,—but how could she bring them in with those great ugly cat's paws!

At this moment she felt herself very unhappy; but it was nothing compared with what she had yet to suffer. In about an hour's time her mother's bell rang, and as her waiting-maid was going into the room Rosalie ran up to her in great haste.

"If madame should ask for Miss Zoe," she said, "just tell her that I have gone out with her to buy some flowers; that will give me time to look for her again. We can't make out what is become of her. O, dear! O, dear!" she added, sobbing, "if any thing has happened to her, it will kill me, I'm sure it will."

Zoe, in grief at seeing her nurse crying on her account, forgetting that she could not know her, went up in order to speak to and console her; but Rosalie pushed her again aside,—this time, however, without kicks or the use of a cane; for the poor woman was so disturbed she had not even spirits to be spiteful.

The alarm was soon spread throughout the house, and no one any longer retained sufficient presence of mind to hide his anxiety. Madame Epernay, not seeing her daughter, and not understanding the mysterious looks and evasive answers of those about her when she spoke of Zoe, began to suspect something was wrong. She rose in haste and ran towards her daughter's chamber, fancying

she was ill, and that the servants wished to hide it from her.

When Zoe saw her mother pass by her, her heart beat violently; she ran after her at once in order to join her, hoping her mother's eye would penetrate her disguise; but a wretched little spaniel which was always at Madame Epernay's heels had no sooner perceived the poor cat, than, far from recognising in her his young mistress, he began to bark at her with such violence that he brought about him every dog in the house. At the same moment terriers, greyhounds, and spaniels flew at the unfortunate Zoe, who had only just time to clamber on to the roof, which she did after a great deal of trouble, not being as yet accustomed to such exercise.

Every body still waited for Rosalie's return, thinking she would bring back Zoe, or would at least obtain some tidings of her; but Rosalie did not come back, she dared not show herself to her mistress. Alas! the unfortunate woman never returned at all.

Madame Epernay then called her daughter in a tone of grief:

"Come, come, my child," she said; "I will not scold you."

Then she hastened through all the rooms of the house, looked about the courtyard, and hunted in the garden; she asked every body she came near: she, usually so quiet, had become through her anxiety impatient and even violent; she scolded all her servants, ordered them to go hunt about the streets for her child; she reproached the porter for having let her daughter go out-of-doors; then she returned to her own room, looked at the time by the clock upon the mantelpiece, and measured the progress of her anxiety by the hours which had slipped by.

In proportion as the day drew on, that anxiety became deeper, and changed into despair. By that time she had sent to the houses of all her friends, all her relations; she had sent to the police, she had inquired amongst all her neighbours, and yet no one was able to give her news of Zoe.

Suddenly the idea struck her that her daughter had died a violent death through some frightful accident, that she had fallen into the fire or out of the window, or that she was drowned; and nobody dared tell her, so as not to deprive her of all hope, and prepare her by degrees for the terrible tidings.

"My daughter! my daughter!" she cried, "O, tell me the truth; shall I ever see her again? what has happened to her? O, hide nothing from me, I entreat you!"

Then she wept, and her sobs would have almost broken your hearts to hear.

No doubt this unfortunate lady was much to be pitied; but nevertheless there was some one in the world even more to be pitied still, and that was Zoe,—Zoe, who heard her mother's sorrowful cries, and yet could not say to her, "I am here." Never had child suffered so much as she; for never do children know how much they are loved and wept

for; she alone felt that frightful sorrow, to see her mother so miserable on account of her.

In the excess of her grief Zoe thought of going to the sorcerer, and entreating him to restore to her her original form; but the sorcerer had fled, and his very stove had disappeared. Zoe remained all night in the yard watching her mother's window, and seeing the shadows of many persons pass and repass before it in their wish to serve her; for Madame Epernay was quite ill with grief.

Zoe watched for a favourable moment when the door of her mother's room should be opened, so as to run in and get near her; but that dreadful spaniel was always there, threatening to tear her with his sharp teeth; and more than that, Zoe began to lose all hope of being recognised even by her mother.

Then the idea came into her head of writing what had happened to her, and calming thus her mother's sad anxiety; but she had nothing to write with,—no pen, no paper, no ink. She tried to scratch some words upon the wall, but could not succeed in the attempt; and besides, who would ever have seriously thought of reading a wall on which she might have scrawled:

"My dear mamma, do not weep for me; for I am changed into a cat."

CHAPTER VI.

THE LETTER.

As soon as day appeared, Zoe, fearing to be driven from the house, where she still experienced a sad kind of pleasure in being near her mother, climbed again on to the roof, in order that she might see what was passing around her without herself being visible. As she sat there, sad and thoughtful, she heard in the courtyard of the next house the noise of a window opening; she then could see into a pretty room where a nice fire was burning. Upon various little tables books were lying; they were English and Italian dictionaries. There were also some flowers in a vase upon a writing-table which soon caught Zoe's attention, for she thought of the letter she wished to write; so she resolved to make her way into that apartment. She leaped first upon the window-sill; and observing that there was no one in the room, she went in bravely.

In her passage she knocked down a slice of bread placed beside a chalk drawing, which made her imagine that some one would be soon coming into the room to draw. Zoe had eaten nothing since the evening before; she could not resist the temptation; she ate up the whole slice of bread, and would have even picked up the crumbs if there had been any.

After this sumptuous breakfast she wished to write her letter, and for this purpose leaped upon

the arm-chair which was near the table, and seized the first pen she could lay her paw on; alas! the difficulty was then to hold the pen and trace out legible characters. After having made several such attempts that she thought represented words, Zoe tried to read her letter over; but not a syllable could she make out; there was an infinity of zigzags, triangles, diamonds, things which looked like pointed noses, in fact every thing except what could be called writing; it was, indeed, what was to be expected from a cat's paw,—I can't describe it better.

Vexed to see that she had no better success, she threw down the pen, and dipped her whole paw into the ink and tried to write with her claws; but truly that was a very different matter: instead of one letter, she then formed six strokes at once, and made such blots, such tremendous blots, that if she had gone on, she would soon have exhausted a dozen inkstands.

She had already spattered the ink over all the papers which were on the table, over the arm-chair and two or three books, when the owner of the room opened the door and came in. She was a tall young lady about sixteen years old, who appeared not a little surprised to find a big cat, which she had never seen before, busily engaged writing at her table.

Far from being angry at the mischief done, Eglantine (that was the young lady's name), delighted to find so well-bred a cat, stroked Zoe again and again, gave her some comfits and cracknels, and some nice milk which had been left from her breakfast; and Zoe remembered what her writingmaster had often said when giving her her lesson:

"Some day, miss, you will be very happy that you know how to write."

Zoe also called to mind the sorcerer's words, which her grief had at first driven from her recollection:

"You shall never return to your natural shape till some one shall say to you, 'Zoe, I forgive you.'"

And then the poor cat, seeing herself so well treated, took courage, and hoped some day to be able to induce this beautiful young girl, who had already taken a liking to her, to say those happy words:

"Zoe, I forgive you."

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRIALS.

In the evening Zoe went back to her mother's house to learn how she got on; but Madame Epernay was gone from home. Her family had hastened to tear her away from a spot which occasioned her such cruel remembrances: a project was formed of taking her for a voyage to Italy for change of scene, for it was greatly feared she would sink under her misfortune.

Zoe felt very sad at her mother's absence, and the thought that she had left for the very purpose



"I must give you a name, though, since I mean to keep you..."

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of forgetting her afflicted her deeply. She knew that her mother would be long inconsolable; but the idea that the people who surrounded her would use all their efforts to blot her out from her memory was a sad trial, and, in her anxiety, she felt anger against her family for trying to give her mother consolation. Zoe passed the night hiding in the coachhouse, where she found it very cold; she would have felt it warmer in the stable, but did not dare go there through fear of the horses.

As soon as the window of Eglantine's little parlour was opened, Zoe leapt in, and was soon beside her. The young lady received her even better than the day before, for she seemed an old companion now.

"Puss," said she, "come here."

Zoe would not answer to that name, and even seemed angry at her being called so.

"Darling," said Eglantine.

But Zoe would not answer either to Darling.

"I must give you a name though, since I mean to keep you," said the young lady; "particularly as you can't tell me what your name is yourself."

At these words Zoe had a bright idea; she leaped at one bound through the window, got upon the tiles, and scampered off to her own house; and soon clearing the staircase three steps at a time, she managed to get in and creep to her own room. Things were in a state of great confusion on account of the removal; every thing in the room was topsyturvy, and every drawer open; Zoe's clothes and

trinkets were scattered about, ready to be packed away and put out of sight. As every body was busy, Zoe saw that she might do almost what she pleased without being observed; so she very cleverly seized hold of one of her little handkerchiefs, a pile of which stood upon the drawers, and speedily scampered away.

Zoe had herself embroidered her name in one of the corners of this handkerchief; and no sooner had she got back to Eglantine than she spread the handkerchief on the ground before her, and with her paw pointed to the three letters which composed her name, "Z O E."

"Zoe!" read Eglantine aloud; and the cat jumped at once upon her knees; then she went to some distance in order to be again called.

It was in vain that her young mistress tried to make her come by calling her by any other name; the cat always pointed to Zoe, embroidered on the little handkerchief; and Eglantine at last, seeing that she would not answer to any other but this name, supposed that it was the one which had always been given to her, and therefore made up her mind to call her by no other.

It is the mistress generally who has to teach her cat; but in this case it was just the reverse, for the cat taught her mistress the name she chose to be called by. This appeared singular enough; but Eglantine was well aware what intelligence domestic animals often possess, and she had heard such strange tales about them, that she was but little surprised at what she saw in her own favourite. Zoe was now regularly established in the house under her true name: the most difficult step was taken; all that she had now to do was so to manage as to get some one to say, "I forgive you!" and the least bit of mischief she did might produce such a result.

But, in order to be pardoned by her mistress, she must, in the first place, make her angry; and that was not so easy a thing as would at first sight appear.

Eglantine had received as a present a large box of comfits, which seemed very nice indeed. Zoe saw this box, and set at once about devouring the whole of its contents; and then waited joyfully for her young mistress's return, under the expectation that she would scold her.

But her hope was vain; Eglantine was not in the least greedy: she saw immediately that Zoe had eaten up her comfits; and, instead of putting herself in a passion, she said:

"That was right, my pet; you guessed that I meant them for you."

Zoe was angry at her being so amiable; she resolved to punish her for it.

Eglantine drew very nicely. For several days past she had been diligently completing a landscape she intended showing her father; the drawing was very far advanced, in fact, it only wanted a few touches to finish it altogether.

Zoe, seeing her mistress had bestowed a great deal of pains on her work, thought that if it were spoiled she would be very angry. So, one day, when Eglantine was out, the malicious cat got hold of the drawing, tore it into strips, and then so licked the pieces, that trees, water, cows, and houses were nothing but one unintelligible smear.

After this fine piece of work, Zoe went and hid herself under the table, to watch for her mistress's return and consequent anger.

Eglantine did return, and very shortly. She was some time in the room before she discovered that the bits of paper scattered about the carpet were really and truly parts of her beautiful drawing; but when she had made out beyond a question that it was her pet work that had been thus badly treated, instead of flying into the rage which Zoe so confidently expected, she could not refrain from laughing heartily.

"O, if papa only saw this," she said, "how he would laugh at me! 'Well, my dear,' he would be sure to say, 'what do you keep cats for?"

Thus speaking, Eglantine picked up the pieces of her drawing, and threw them all into the fire, so that no trace should remain of her dear Zoe's crime; she then set about another drawing, a fresh landscape, as if nothing extraordinary had occurred. One could not have detected in that placid face the least impression of anger.

Zoe, however, came boldly out of her hidingplace, trusting that the sight of her would excite her mistress's rage; and that, after having scolded her a little, she would at last say to her those wished-for words, "Zoe, I forgive you!"

But Eglantine did not scold her at all.

"Hide yourself as quick as you can," she said instead; "papa is coming, and you know that he does not like cats."

And Zoe walked away sorrowful and discouraged.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANOTHER TRIAL.

Some days after this, hope again sprang up in her heart. As she entered the chamber of her mistress, Zoe perceived a beautiful wreath of roses, which had just been brought in.

The waiting-maid had been imprudent enough to put it on the pillow of the bed whilst the hairdresser was arranging Eglantine's beautiful tresses; and she herself, being seated at her toilet-table, could not see what was passing around her.

Zoe observed that the moment was a favourable one; as her mistress was going to a great ball, for which it appeared that greater pains than usual were required by way of dress, this wreath was an object of the highest value: for this reason, therefore, Zoe resolved on its destruction; not an instant, she thought, should be lost in making it a sacrifice.

If Eglantine had borne so patiently the loss of her comfits and her drawing, she could not be insensible to the destruction of her wreath.

Whilst the hairdresser, all the time he was

plying his fingers, was relating with busy tongue the numerous beautiful headdresses he had that very evening prepared for the very same ball that Eglantine was going to, the cat jumped lightly on to the bed, and went very softly and lay down right on top of the wreath, so that there was not a single flower but was crushed by the weight of her body. It had been raining a good deal that day; Zoe had been running about the streets, and therefore added to her other charms the one of being in a horridly muddy state; to such a degree, indeed, that every rose of that once beautiful wreath became quickly dirty, wet, and faded, as if it had been exposed to a storm; with this difference, that a real rose might be again recovered by the sun, while those roses could never look bright again.

When the hairdresser, having finished the plait, put his hand out to get the wreath, in order to put it in its place on Eglantine's head, and, instead of the beautiful flowers, caught hold of a cat by the ears, he drew back in some alarm.

What was his grief at seeing the miserable state to which that wreath was reduced! the roses hanging down and crushed, covered with mud, not fit even to be put on the hat of a poor shepherdess in carnival time.

"O, miss," he cried, "I can't possibly put that thing on your head!"

And he pointed with an angry frown at the unfortunate wreath of flowers.

Eglantine had not an atom of vanity; she was a great deal too beautiful. The sight of that crum-

pled mass of dirty flowers, far from making her angry, only made her smile:

"Well, Fanny," she said, "it is very clear I can't wear a wreath to-night; so give me that bunch of lilac I wore the other day; any flowers look well with a white dress."

At these words, Zoe rushed out of the room in a state of despair almost impossible to conceive. "What!" she thought, "not even proud of her beauty! not even fond of dress! I spoil all her finery; and then, instead of being in a rage, as any other girl would be, she does not even let herself be made uncomfortable!"

Zoe reproached Eglantine for her sweetness of disposition as if it were a crime: she accused her of indifference; she could not forgive in her an amiability of character which disarranged all her plans, upset all her hopes. Thus it is that we often consider as a defect in our friends a good quality which simply causes inconvenience to ourselves.

CHAPTER IX.

RESENTMENT.

Zoe passed a whole month in sadness and discouragement; she was dreadfully tired of being a cat, and deeply grieved at not seeing her mother; she fancied that Madame Epernay had adopted one of her cousins, and this thought made her weep with jealousy.

She despaired of ever succeeding in making her mistress angry; or at least she felt that, in order to irritate her, she must cause her serious trouble, and this she could not make up her mind to do.

Zoe was anxious indeed to recover her former shape; but the idea of being ungrateful, of afflicting that good Eglantine, who was so fond of her, was very painful to her; still, the desire of again embracing her mother overcame every other feeling.

Eglantine had a little brother, into whose chamber the cat was never allowed to go. They had always driven her away when she approached the door; for they were afraid the cat would scratch the child.

In spite of every care on the part of the servants of the house, Zoe found means to creep into the room and get to the child's cot; and as he wanted to play with her, she put out her claws, and made a dash at his cheek.

But things happened differently to what she expected: the child having turned his face quickly round, the scratch was a great deal longer than she intended, and, indeed, narrowly escaped one of his eyes. His screams brought Eglantine to the spot. O, indeed this time her anger was aroused; she drove Zoe off with indignation, and Zoe fled, more unhappy than she had ever yet felt; for she truly feared that they would never forgive her for having shown herself so cruelly spiteful.

Zoe dared not set foot in her mistress's house after this affair. She wandered about the tiles, and passed whole nights in mewing piteously. She did

not see the slightest chance of ever getting into Eglantine's good graces again. She knew that the little boy was still suffering from his scratch, that his eye was not quite cured; besides, she did Eglantine the justice to think she could not be fond of her again.

One night as, sadder than ever, she was sitting at the edge of the roof, reflecting bitterly on the cruelty of her fate, she suddenly perceived a bright light in the room where Eglantine's little brother slept,—that very room which she had never been permitted to enter. A lamp, placed near the child's bed, had set fire to the curtains; the servants were at supper, and no one could guess the danger to which he was exposed.

The chamber was already becoming hot with the flames; and the poor little boy, half-suffocated by the smoke, had lost all power of crying out.

Zoe saw the danger; more than that, she had sufficient presence of mind to determine how to act to save him from it. She rushed into the chamber, broke a pane of glass at the risk of cutting her paws, and then, springing on to the bell-rope, rang such a tremendous peal as brought quickly to the spot every servant in the house.

Eglantine herself rushed thither in alarm; she burst into the room heedless of the flames, carried out her little brother in her arms, and in her deep emotion, did not even feel surprised at seeing her cat thus hanging to the bell-rope.

The servants were not so indifferent; they extinguished the fire in all haste; but, when the

danger was over, and the poor child recovered, they made a great talk about the extraordinary, prodigious, unheard-of way in which their young master had been saved.

"It was to the cat," they said, "was owing the saving of the child's life; but for her he must have been suffocated. With what intelligence she had found out his danger! what astonishing cleverness she must have had to think of ringing the bell! Ah, that was indeed astonishing! That cat," they added, "is as clever as a monkey."

In their enthusiasm they were not at all offended at having come at a cat's ringing. Which only proves, that by force of intelligence a very little creature may command much bigger ones, without the pride of the bigger ones being hurt by it.

Eglantine, hearing all these praises, wished to thank her good cat, to which she owed her brother's life. But Zoe, who remembered her mistress's resentment, dared not come near her; and therefore, as soon as the boy had been placed out of danger, she had climbed up again to her place upon the roof, little thinking that so much good was said about her.

She did not, however, stop there very long; for they began calling her on all sides.

"Zoe," said Eglantine, in her sweetest and kindest voice; and Zoe came down from her lofty seat, which was very prudent of her, as you will see.

She crept timidly into her mistress's room.

"O! here you are at last," said Eglantine, smiling; but the cat ran hiding under the table.

"I am no longer angry with you, my pretty little cat," continued Eglantine. "If you scratched Frederick's face the other day, you have prevented his being burnt to-night; so you have repaired your fault; come along then, and don't hide yourself."

But Zoe did not move from her place; she was waiting, she was hoping for those marvellous and magic words, which she had been so long, so very long, in getting her mistress to pronounce.

Eglantine at last, becoming more pressing, went towards the table. "Come, come," said she, in a soothing tone, "don't be afraid that I shall scold you; I am not angry with you any more. Zoe, I forgive you!"

Scarce had she uttered the words when the sorcerer's prediction was accomplished: Zoe recovered her former shape, which was a little inconvenient for her getting from under the table. Just imagine, then, what it would have been if she had ceased to be a cat when she was still upon the tiles. Her happiness would indeed have caused her a great deal more trouble!

CHAPTER X.

HOW AN UNTRUTH MAY BE PARDONABLE.

You may guess Eglantine's surprise when she saw come from beneath the table-cover a charming little

girl, lovely as an angel, instead of the great ugly cat that she expected to see appear.

Zoe, overcome with joy, rushed at once into her arms.

"O, take me quickly to my mother," she cried out; "how happy she will be to see me again!"

Eglantine, who had a tender heart, comprehended at once Zoe's anxiety to see her mother. But she wished, before taking her home, to break the news to Madame Epernay, fearing that, after so much grief, so great a joy might prove fatal to her.

Madame Epernay had returned to Paris a few days before.

This tender mother was still very ill; for the six months she had been deprived of her child, she had not ceased to shed tears. Zoe was impatient to see her again, and it was with the greatest difficulty that they prevented her from running at once to throw herself into her arms. She could not understand how the pleasure of finding her daughter again might prove dangerous to her; children cannot imagine that there may be danger in too much happiness.

Eglantine, pitying her impatience, went herself to call on Madame Epernay, seeking meanwhile in her imagination for some fable to prepare that poor mother's heart, so torn by grief, for the unexpected shock of overwhelming happiness.

"Madame," she said, as she timidly approached Madame Epernay, whom she found, as was her wont, in tears, and surrounded by objects which constantly brought back the memory of her daughter,—" madame, will you forgive me for awakening in your heart a very painful remembrance—"

"Speak, young lady," interrupted Madame Epernay, who guessed that it was about her dear Zoe; "do not fear to make me sadder by talking of her, for I think of her without ceasing."

"Have you had no information about the poor child since the day she disappeared?"

"What! have you?" cried Madame Epernay with startling haste, and her eyes lit up with hope;

"O, speak, I do entreat you!"

"I may be deceived," continued Eglantine, who had prepared her charitable untruth; "but I have by chance heard mention made of a little girl, about the same age as yours, who was stolen by some beggars a few months ago, and—"

"My poor Zoe! What! can you be still alive?" cried Madame Epernay in a delirium of

hope.

"It may not be she," answered Eglantine at once, alarmed at the poor mother's sudden excitement; "I have not seen the child these wretches kidnapped away, and therefore I cannot tell if it is yours; but if you were to give me, madame, a portrait, or an exact description of the little girl you lost, I might—"

"Here is her portrait," interrupted Madame Epernay; "it was like her, though she was much

more beautiful."

As she spoke, she took from her neck a miniature which constantly reposed on her bosom.

"O Heaven!" she cried, "could I but see her once again!"

At these words she fainted. The servants ran to her help; and as soon as she recovered Eglantine retired, allowing her the full measure of this first degree of hope she had excited in her heart.

Madame Epernay passed the whole night without sleep, in a state of agitation which it is impossible to describe; at one moment she gave herself up to a foolish joy, not doubting but that her daughter would be restored to her the very next morning; then she got discouraged, and thought that so much happiness could not be meant for her.

In the evening she received a note from Eglantine, which told her that she was continuing her inquiries; but conjuring her not to take any steps herself, as what she was doing required the utmost prudence to carry out.

Next morning, about ten o'clock, Madame Epernay saw Eglantine enter her apartment. The young lady appeared with such a joyful face, that Madame Epernay, by her look alone, felt prepared for good news.

"I have much hope, madame," said Eglantine; "the little girl who was taken away, and is now with the beggars, is fair, very fair; she is eight years old."

"Like my daughter."

"Her name is Aglae or Zoe; my nurse, who told me of the circumstance, was not able to recollect her name exactly: what she particularly remarked, however, was, that the child had blue

eyes, fringed with long dark lashes, and very fair hair."

"O, it is she! it must be she! Could I but see her!"

"This evening," continued Eglantine, "I am to see her myself."

"I will go with you," said Madame Epernay.

"O, that cannot be; if the woman only knew that we suspected the child was not her own, she would leave Paris at once, and perhaps we should lose sight of her altogether. Let me act alone; about five o'clock I will return and tell you the result of my inquiries."

In fact, at five o'clock Eglantine came back; and Madame Epernay, directly she saw her, hastened to embrace her. All the joy that a mother's heart was about to feel was depicted on the beautiful face of the young girl.

"My child!" cried Madame Epernay; "it is she, is it not?"

"Yes, madame," replied Eglantine, trembling all over, "it is indeed she; I have spoken to her; but—you cannot see her before to-morrow."

"O, why not?" asked the impatient mother.

"Because to-day-" Eglantine was seeking for another little untruth; but the mother, who stood by trembling, longing for her child, asking for her with her eyes, and already extending her arms to fold her to her breast,—that joy, that impatience so imposing, so holy,—stopped her.

"Speak," said Madame Epernay; "why cannot

I embrace her to-day?"

"Because," answered Eglantine with a smile, "you are still too weak for so much joy."

"No, no!" exclaimed the poor mother; "happiness gives us strength: I can see my daughter again, and yet not die beneath the shock. O, restore her to me! Restore her to me!"

A noise was heard in the adjoining chamber.

"Ah, I guess it now!" cried Madame Epernay, almost beside herself; "she is here!—you brought her with you! Zoe! Zoe! my daughter! my child!"

"Mamma!" replied a voice so dear to her, "it is indeed I; I am still alive!"

And Zoe, whom the servants had been trying to detain in the antechamber, escaped from their hands, and bursting into the room, fell into her mother's arms.

MR. MARTIN DE MONTMARTRE.*

CHAPTER I.

HE GIVES A GREAT DINNER.

THERE was, once upon a time, a donkey who had made his fortune: he had speculated on 'Change; his speculations had been fortunate, and he had become possessed of a good sum of money. Not one of your big capitalists, who move states with their gold, and ruin themselves in trying to make kings; but tolerably rich notwithstanding,—as rich, indeed, as a donkey could ever be expected to become.

With his change of condition, this donkey felt that he must change his habits, and even his company; but, as at bottom he was a good sort of fellow, and did not wish to offend his old companions by simply showing them the door, he hoped that by the mere difference of his style of living he should intimidate his friends, and little by little get them to leave him altogether.

* For the information of our young readers, we may observe, that "Martin" is a common French name for an ass; as Reynard is for a fox, and Bruin for a bear, in English. "Montmartre" stands just without the city of Paris; and is as famous for its pleasure-parties and its donkey-rides as our Blackheath or Hampstead Heath.—A. E.

He sold his ugly shed and wretched trough; he had a beautiful stable built, arranged, after the English fashion, with splendid marble mangers, mahogany stalls, racks of burnished iron, and bronze lamps, all as fine as a prince's.

Our donkey, who was called Martin, like the rest of that family, considering such a name too vulgar for an ass who had made a fortune, resolved to give it more distinction by joining to it the name of his native place; he therefore at first styled himself Mr. Martin de Montmartre, which naturally slipped before long into Mr. de Montmartre alone.

One day he invited all his former comrades to a great feast. He fancied that the splendour of every thing would intimidate them; and that, as they were accustomed to drink out of an ugly pail, and chew sorry straw in an old shed, they would be very uncomfortable and ill at ease at the table of a great lord; for he thought himself such already. had all his chandeliers alight, thinking that these donkeys would be very much ashamed to see their battered saddles and ragged halters so brilliantly lit up. He had given orders that there should not be brought to table the least bit of thistle; and he fully expected to see his guests perfectly bewildered. But he was mistaken: donkeys are more difficult to bewilder than some would think; they have no objection to be made comfortable, and are not at all frightened at any amount of splendour.

They were, on the contrary, perfectly delighted with the brilliancy which surrounded them; they pricked up their ears and stuck up their cravats (the halter may be considered as a donkey's cravat), and showed no alarm whatever at the great light thrown upon their poverty. Dinner was served up; far from regretting the thistles, they did not so much as perceive their absence; they would even have been very much surprised if they had been there.

"What! thistles," they would have said, "with marble and mahogany! O, dear! they do not suit each other at all."

The master of the house overwhelmed them with politeness, the more as he had quite made up his mind not to invite them again. The ill-bred tone and familiar habits of these donkeys shocked him terribly.

Their chief amusement was to tease him, by recalling to his mind the time when they had seen him poor.

"Ah," cried one, "when you went to mill, you never dreamed of becoming so great a personage!"

"Do you remember," asked another, "that farm where you were forced to get in all the hay, and the sound blows they gave you because you tried to nibble a little bit of your load? Have hay over one's very ears, and not be able to touch a bit of it, was a little too bad!"

Then they laughed outright at this stroke of wit; just that sort of loud laugh, you know, that asses indulge in, and which I will not dare to imitate,—it is so vulgar.

And then, if you had seen these creatures jeering at their host, as great lords might do at a no-

body; quite ready to consider him ridiculous because he had good taste, and actually despising him because he had changed his old saddle for a handsome English one; criticising his manners, the liveries of his servants, whispering in each other's ears, grinning in a mysterious way, and looking at one another with malicious meaning.

"He wants to play the great personage," they said; "what insolent pretension!"

"It's all very well, if it lasts," added an old female donkey, who was not a little envious of all she saw.

Thus it happened that these ungrateful guests could not pardon their friend for enjoying a splendour which he had even invited themselves to partake of. They laughed at him because he had gone to a great expense for them; and yet, if he had not done so, they would have called him miserly, beggarly, and I don't know what hard names beside.

"So much for my friends," thought our rich ass; "let us now try strangers."

CHAPTER II.

HE ENTERS INTO POLITE SOCIETY.

QUITE resolved on changing his company, and above all, to get rid of the society to which he had hitherto belonged, our ass set out upon a journey, to break up his old connexions.



He went to a fashionable watering-place, where he was received with the greatest cordiality: every thing odd and out-of-the-way is sure of a favourable reception at such idle places. As civility costs and means nothing, it is lavishly bestowed; people seem to find in the duty of seeing each other day by day some consolation for the possibility of never seeing each other again.

The ass was very much amused: as the watering-place was among the hills, the facility with which he got up and down them made him sought after by every body; no excursion was ever complete without him, and with the ladies he was an especial favourite. Although ignorant, as he had travelled about a good deal in his youth his conversation was agreeable. He told a story capitally; and even that inherent defect with which animals of his species are not unjustly charged added a certain piquancy to his style. He was very obstinate in his opinions; but this obstinacy, however abominable in a cross-road, or when it was a question of wading a stream, was not without a certain attraction when applied to an argument; for it served to give it spirit and to keep it alive.

Mr. de Montmartre had besides other little talents which serve to make a figure in society: he sang with taste, and could take his part in a concert; at billiards he played badly, but he paid well. So that he was on the most friendly terms with a good many wild young fellows, who were not at all displeased to repair their losses at his expense.

They were for the most part elegant racehorses,

young lords, who were proud of their pedigree, and very full of their grandfathers. These fashionable dandies, it is true, sometimes laughed at the *parvenu*, as his former friends had done; but the ass found their irony at least bearable.

"I rather prefer," he would say to himself, "the disdainful condescension of these amiable strangers to the envious malevolence of my previous companions; for I do not count upon the pure affection of those who are indifferent to me: if their levity sometimes offends me, their ingratitude at least can never cause me sorrow."

This ass was a philosopher; he was right—a stab from an unknown hand is less painful to the heart than pricks with a pin purposely administered by the hand of a friend.

The season for drinking the waters being over, he returned to Paris; the new connexions he had formed made a residence there more agreeable; every morning he took a turn in the Bois de Boulogne; then, for the rest of the day, there were loungings and luncheons and pic-nics and pleasures without end.

The asses of the Bois de Boulogne seeing him always with horses, decked out in the same way and galloping like them, did not consider him as one of themselves; but merely observed, as they watched his paces, "That's a very ugly horse!"

Our rich donkey, not hearing these remarks, thought himself charming; and as every body admired every thing he possessed, he imagined himself a fine fellow. In fact, no one had more pretension to elegance or lived more freely than Mr. de Montmartre: he kept open house, his dinners were exquisite; he had his box at Franconi's, and it became the lounge of all the celebrities; it was there that reputations were made; these fashionable young fellows encouraged all fresh faces, gave the signal for applause; not a soul ventured a single "bravo" before they had given some mark of approbation, either by voice or condescending nod. People considered them rather ridiculous; but they were the fashion, and therefore every thing they did passed muster.

And yet Mr. de Montmartre was not happy; his vanity was flattered, but he lived in a perpetual constraint, which cast a shade over all his pleasures.

In order to hide his shameful ears, his hatter had advised him to wear auricles, and these auricles were a constant source of annoyance to him; moreover they made him almost deaf, which deprived him of the pleasure of hearing the cutting things that were said about him.

He had a predilection for going to bed early, like a sober citizen as he was; but his new friends would keep him up whole nights together, and then take advantage of his being half-asleep to win his money from him.

This gay sort of life began to weary him more than the hard work of his youth had done; he felt a void in his heart, which went on enlarging till his health got seriously affected. Then the doctors advised him to try pure country-air; and in order to follow their instructions, he hired a pretty little pleasure-stable in the environs of Paris, to which he retired in secret.

But solitude had no better success with him than the hubbub of the world; the feeling of languor, from which he was suffering, instead of passing away, only increased with repose; and he might perhaps have sunk under it, but that one day—

MONSIEUR DE PHILOMELA.

CHAPTER I.

VANITY OF MIND.

At the same time there lived a celebrated nightingale, who, although not so rich as our donkey, enjoyed a very agreeable competency. His nest was a very comfortable one, seated in a wood frequented by a large number of the same brood; taking all in all, he had no great reason to complain of his lot.

But this nightingale had a most avaricious vanity, if I may make use of the expression; he would have wished to monopolise universal praise. If any one said a word in favour of a brother or cousin, he was quite put out, it wounded him mortally; any eulogium bestowed upon another seemed as if filched from himself; if you were unlucky enough to feel any pleasure in listening to his neighbour, he became your enemy for life; he detested his neighbour too, and tried to wreak his vengeance not only on the innocent offender, but on his even more inoffensive wife and children. This nightingale was, in truth, a most unsociable creature:

he felt pleasure nowhere, sulked with every body, and was a living proof that talent is nothing without sweetness of character.

"I am a great fool," he said to himself one day, "to live in this forest. I don't produce any effect; and, indeed, the reason is simple enough: there are a score of nightingales here who sing quite as well as myself; it is not possible to shine with so many rivals. Let us change our company: let us see creatures without talent; visit chickens, for instance; their cackle cannot enter the lists with my songs: the cock's crow is sonorous, true, but there's no modulation in it. Pigeons now are not particularly musical; I have no one to fear in that new world,—so let us try it."

Thus resolved, he took his flight towards the large dove-cote of a farm situated at some miles from the forest. The hens had gone to roost at the first gray of evening,—those ladies are afraid of the night-air; he found them all assembled in one large apartment. They received him kindly, politely, but not eagerly.

"They don't know yet who I am," he thought; "but to-morrow I will send in my card to the mistress of the house; and I can imagine her astonishment, her joy, when she learns my name. How confused will she feel at having treated so cavalierly the greatest celebrity of the age!"

The next morning he sent to that very respectable family, the fowls,—with whom he had spent a few minutes the evening before,—an embossed card, on which was engraved his name:

MONSIEUR DE PHILOMELA.

Nightingale.

The word below, nightingale, he had written in pencil, for fear of being mistaken for some other bird; which was not very likely, by the by, as his family name, Philomela, is tolerably well known.

He abstained for two whole days from paying any fresh visits, as he did not wish to appear too eager, and in order not to let the folks imagine that he did not know where to pass his time.

To tell the truth also, he was in expectation of receiving some mark of civility from the master of the house; but the cock was as stiff as ever, and the name of Monsieur de Philomela did not seem to make the slightest impression on him.

The third day, therefore, Master Nightingale decked himself with great care; he rubbed his beak, shook his wings, put on his sober-coloured waist-coat, his white gloves, and hopped off to revisit the family-hen, on whom he intended to try his powers of charming. With him the love of admiration was a passion; it was of little importance to him whether the lady who flattered him was young or old, pretty or ugly: for the true lovers of praise flattery has no age: the incense has the same perfume whatever the hand which casts it on the flame.

CHAPTER II.

THE SUFFERINGS OF SELF-LOVE.

On entering the drawing-room, Monsieur de Philomela was prepared for a sort of eagerness, a gentle flutter, caused by his entrance.

"All the young pullets will be glancing at me," he said to himself; "they would like to inspire the famous poet, bind him to their apron-strings, make him despair, in order to render his songs the sweeter."

But he was very much surprised to find that they did not pay the least attention to him; they huddled together into a corner of the room like so many boarding-school misses, and troubled themselves very little about the celebrated poet who was to immortalise them.

One of them merely observed, in a low tone, to her companions:

"O, dear, only look at the gentleman who has just hopped in; isn't he little!"

And then they all burst into a cackling laugh; which being over, they seemed to forget that such a bird existed.

"They are a set of little fools!" said the discontented nightingale to himself; "they evidently never read; our verses are unknown to them: I understand their indifference, and pity them."

Thus explaining their conduct, he drew near the married hens,—mothers of families, who were con-

versing among themselves; these he found very amiable. They asked him how long he expected to stop in that part of the country; if he found it pleasant; whether he expected to make a long stay; and a variety of other small talk: but as to his talents, not a word was said,—no praise of his verses, not even the faintest shadow; for, however distant, the poor poet would have seized it at once with avidity.

"O, they are mere mothers of families!" he thought; "full of their children; they don't read any more than their daughters. Let us see the male part of the creation."

This was composed of a cock, twelve pigeons, seven ganders, and eight drakes.

He hopped up to the cock, and made him a bow. This cock was a big puffy sort of bird, who, when he spoke, made a great noise and fuss; he was just then very busy talking politics, and appeared very put out because he had been chosen as a representative, as chief of a party, without being previously consulted.

Our nightingale had heard quite enough, after a few minutes' discussion, to be disgusted; for he hated politics.

He therefore drew near the pigeons; he thought that one might venture to speak to them about music and poetry, fancying that such tender birds must be fond of the fine arts.

He was mistaken.

"The fine arts!" exclaimed a very pedantic pigeon, "they only serve to enervate the soul."

"They are all very well for females," answered a drake with disdain.

"For yours, perhaps," added the pedantic pigeon, who had been married a great many years; "but our doves are already sentimental enough, without having their heads turned with the arts."

The mistress of the house, who heard this conversation, thought that if the nightingale defended the fine arts he must be possessed of some talent.

"Are you a musician? do you play?" she asked with politeness.

"A little, madame," the nightingale answered with a sudden fit of modesty; "we poets are all naturally fond of music."

"Ah, you are a poet too!"

This exclamation charmed our nightingale; he thought himself despised, and it was a consolation for him to find that he was merely not known.

"You would do us a great favour to give us a tune," cried out a very fat hen-pigeon, who had brought nine daughters with her.

The nightingale allowed himself to be pressed in the usual style; and then began to sing, in finer voice than usual, through his having had so long a rest.

He really did sing charmingly; but his audience listened very coolly.

"Poor stuff!" said one pigeon, in a whisper, to another.

"A falsetto voice!" said a drake to his friend.

As to the big cock, he did not even listen to him at all. No sooner had he heard Monsieur de

Philomela asked for a song, than he fancied they would call upon him next; and therefore he began running over his list in his head. It was useless to expect to have him for a listener after that.

However, the mistress of the house, who had a good deal of tact, and was quite a bird of the world, paid him a great many compliments in set phrases.

"You must be very fatigued," she said. "Will you not take something to drink? What a light and flexible voice you have! How much you must have studied, to be able to sing as you do!"

Notwithstanding this praise, the nightingale could not help seeing that he was not understood; his pretensions were flattered, but his talent was not felt. The remark that "his voice was light" arose from the trills which occurred in his song, and which they took for mere lightness; little troubling themselves whether the said trills were well or ill performed. And then, to say to a nightingale, "You must be very fatigued;"—to him who is accustomed to sing for whole nights together!—O, it was ridiculous, truly!

As long as no rival appeared upon the stage, the poet, nevertheless, bore up against his humiliation. If a person feels no sort of fondness for us, we are apt to say, How cold he or she is! but if that person love another, we think we are hardly done by. Thus it was with our poet when the big cock began his song; his shrill voice made the whole court ring again, and at its close there was a perfect concert of applause. What admirable style! what splendid notes! Could any song be bolder

or more charming! As to the sentiment, it was thought unexceptionable.

The nightingale could bear it no longer: that loud and squeaking voice, all out of tune, set his very beak on edge; the praise it obtained quite upset him; he was on thorns; so, taking advantage of the moment when the fowls were surrounding his rival, and paying him their compliments, he took up his cane and his hat, and hopped off in a fit of despair.

CHAPTER III.

SINGULAR MEETING.

HE travelled about some days in a state of indecision, not knowing in what place to take refuge; the desire which he felt to shine made him fly the presence of his equals—of those who had as much talent as himself, and his intense annoyance at not being understood made him avoid his inferiors. So that really he did not too well know what would become of him.

Out of spirits and discontented, he went to perch upon a tree which shaded an elegant summer-house, where he remained some hours meditating on the vicissitudes of life.

Beneath that tree was reposing a philosopher, whom a sympathetic melancholy had attracted thither. This philosopher was our donkey. Stretched upon the flowery turf, he thought—alas! once upon a time he would have browsed; but his illusions were now passed.

Both of them, the ass and the nightingale, experienced the same degree of sadness, the same tedium, the same discouragement; I do even think they would both have looked on suicide without horror, so dreadful was their spleen.

Whilst each was moaning in his own way, a little boy happened to pass by, followed by a beautiful young girl.

"O, sister dear," he called out, blushing with pleasure, "a donkey!"

And at the same moment he ran towards the philosopher, and fondled him most affectionately.

"He has no master," said the child; "suppose we were to take him with us. Perhaps he's lost, poor fellow. He looks ill: we will nurse him up. O, I should be so happy to have a donkey of my own!"

"We will take him if you like," said the girl; "if his master claims him, we can but give him up."

The child in delight took the ass by the bridle, stroked his ears fondly,—those long ears, the object of so much derision and contempt,—leaped upon his back, and rode off quite proud of his conquest.

He had scarce taken a dozen steps, when the nightingale, jealous of the success obtained by an ass, opened his mouth, and poured forth a sweet flood of song.

"Dear brother," cried the young girl now, "a

nightingale!" and she also blushed with pleasure, perhaps also at some remembrance.

She returned gently to the tree, and the nightingale hopped down from bough to bough till he was close to her.

"He has hurt one of his wings," she said with compassion; "he can't fly away, and some hawk will pounce on him. I will take him with me; I will put him in an aviary, and will take great care of him. Do you hear him, brother?—what a delicious voice!"

The child, full of his ass, listened to nothing; nothing in his eyes could come up to that animal. Of what interest were the nightingale's beautiful songs to him? The least bit of a gallop was of more price to him than Philomela's most splendid trills,—and nightingales cannot gallop.

The young girl with a trembling hand made the nightingale captive, who, indeed, made no resistance; she hastened to rejoin her brother, and both went off in delight, felicitating themselves on their good luck.

"What a capital thought it was of ours," said the boy, "to come and take a walk this way! You, who are so fond of nightingales, fall in with one; and as for myself, I find a donkey,—just what I have been wishing for so long. How I wish I was home, to tell mamma that I have got an ass!"

The two prisoners, on their part, did not seem less satisfied with their adventure: the ass was so happy to be fondled, that he quite forgot his sadness and his ailments; the nightingale was so proud of the fuss that was made with him, that he conceived quite a passion for his young mistress, and vowed he never would quit her.

They reached the house, where they were soon both agreeably settled; and where they found themselves so comfortable, that they passed the rest of their days under the shelter of its roof,—the ass loved and well cared for, and the poet listened to and praised.

After many annoyances, much disgust, and not a few heartburns, they had at last attained happiness; for each had met the society which suited him. So true it is, my dear children, that in order to procure felicity we must live with kindly souls who love us, and to whom we can be useful in return, or with superior minds, capable of appreciating our talents and good qualities.

THE FAIRY GRIGNOTTE.

CHAPTER I.

THE ACCUSATION.

THE Fairy Grignotte was a little mouse,—the prettiest little mouse that ever nibbled upon earth. She was gay to madness; had little round eyes very wide awake, which bowed out from her head, and gave her quite a peculiar and whimsical appearance. She was always on the move,—leaping, hopping, or playing; she could not remain still for a single moment unless she was thinking how to play some trick.

Her great pleasure was tickling children's feet, running every moment between their legs, and making them laugh without any cause while they were doing their lessons; which procured them a scolding from their master, who always thought on those occasions that they were laughing at him.

Don't imagine for a moment that she could have made them laugh during play-hours! no, indeed, they were quite at liberty to do so then; and little master or missy cared very little about doing what he or she was permitted to do. What she liked was, disorder and fun out of place: she did not think of tickling children when they were at home, or at the theatre, or at a dance, or, indeed, any where at a place of amusement,—on the contrary, she let them alone then to feel as annoyed as they pleased; but directly they sat down to their books at school, or when they were at church, and generally during the sermon, which was worse still, she would creep in, in her quiet and malicious way, and leave no stone unturned to induce poor children to burst out laughing.

If one of them happened to slip and fall, she would hop up to the others and set to tickling them, so that they began to laugh; then their master would call them *heartless!* and they would all get the reputation of naughty good-for-nothing boys.

The children, who did not know it was the Fairy Grignotte, could not themselves understand why they were so merry.

"What are you laughing at?" one of them would ask his schoolfellow.

"I? why I laugh to see you laugh. And why do you?"

"I? why I'm laughing at that great stupid Merlin down there, giggling like an ape. Just look at him, holding his sides!"

And then all would begin again more heartily than ever; for the Fairy Grignotte was under the table, and was amusing herself in tickling them without their being aware of it.

However, the masters complained dismally of their pupils' giddiness; punishments and tasks came down on the whole class like a hail-storm. It was of no use their keeping in all the scholars at once, they didn't laugh a bit the less; and, what was still more strange, they never could explain what it was that had made them laugh so.

Their parents were annoyed to think they never could take their children out on a holiday on account of bad behaviour, after they had given themselves the trouble to go to the boarding-school to fetch them. They were angry; they scolded, they even threatened their children that they would cease to love them, and went away very angry. The children would cry a little on seeing them go; but the very first time they were in their classes, that wicked little fairy would take her usual walk between their feet, and over their toes, until the laughter began all over again. In fact, they were always laughing; when they were at meals, when at drill, when crying,—yes, even in the midst of their tears, -and when doing penance with the dunce's cap upon their heads. It is true that this punishment, now out of fashion, was well calculated to cause laughter.

Two holidays had passed away, and during these two holidays all the boarders had been kept in,—all; with one exception, however; he being always so dull and moping, that there was not much chance of punishing him for his gaiety. This pupil, somewhat older than the others, was called Samuel; but his schoolfellows christened him Sammy, on account of his glumpiness.

On Saturday morning, then, Samuel was the only one of the boarders who had permission to go

out. His companions saw him leave with envy; and in the evening, when he came back, they abused him in every possible way: they called him hypocrite, Old Sammy, the great bear, the glumpy philosopher, and a score of witticisms of the same kind.

"How do you manage, Sammy, to be so grave when every body else is laughing, and never get a black mark?"

"I do my work," replied Samuel.

"That's a clever answer. So do we do our work. But, in spite of that, we can't help laughing sometimes; but you, old sober-sides, you never laugh. Why don't you?"

"Because I wear nails in my boots."

This reason seemed such a stupid one to the rest of the boys, that they looked at one another, and for an instant fancied their schoolfellow was joking them.

"What stuff are you trying to cram us with about your boots?" exclaimed a handsome youth named Richmond, with a curl of his lip; "of what use are your boots in the matter?"

"To give the Fairy Grignotte such kicks, that she'll not care to come too near my toes."

"Grignotte!" repeated the boys together.

"What do you mean by Fairy Grignotte?"

"Why, it's a nasty little mouse," replied Samuel, "that causes all your troubles."

"A mouse!" said Richmond. "Ah, yes, Grignotte; I remember, it is a French name for a mouse. But do you mean to say that this mouse

THE FAIRY GRIGNOTTE.

is the cause of our always being in hot water? How is that?"

"Why, she gets under the desk, and on to your legs, during your lesson; and then she tickles you, and that makes you laugh."

"Well, if that's the case, we'll do as you do; we'll have nails put in our boots."

"You would do much wiser to set a mouse-trap."

"What, on our boots!" cried a sharp little fellow.

"No, Mr. Clever, a mousetrap under the table, with a bit of bacon or cheese in it."

"Bacon or cheese!" exclaimed Richmond, in his turn, with surprise. "You don't mean to say you can catch a fairy with a slice of bacon or a morsel of cheese!"

"Why not? To be sure you can," said Samuel, "when the fairy is a mouse. Just try, however; and you'll see, that when Grignotte is caught, you won't get any more scoldings."

A good many of the boys refused to believe that such a personage as Fairy Grignotte existed; and even those who did give credence to this explanation of their laughter could not admit that a mouse who was a fairy would ever allow herself to be caught, and, above all, with such a vulgar bait as a bit of bacon or a scrap of cheese.

CHAPTER II.

THE MASTER'S BACK.

It was just about this time that their master came in. He had been examining a building the brick-layers were putting up in the garden; and without observing it, he had brushed against a wall that had been freshly plastered, so that he had got himself in a pretty mess; his back was all over white, from his collar to the tail of his coat. But notwithstanding this, he was as grave and strict as ever.

The boys no sooner caught sight of this white back, which went unconsciously promenading up and down the schoolroom, than the Fairy Grignotte came as usual to tickle their legs; and off they set laughing like so many little mad things.

The youngest broke out first; the elder boys bit their lips, suddenly had a violent cough, or tried to pick up a pen which had not fallen down,—in fact, invented all sorts of excuses to hide their laughter. There was one, above all, who twisted his mouth into the most horrible grimaces; through which a grin, however, was very perceptible, in spite of his attempts to conceal it. The master was not to be deceived by such hypocrisy.

"What is the matter, sir?" he inquired in a tone of severity; "answer me,—what are you laughing at?"

"I'm not laughing, sir," said the impudent storyteller; "it's only a toothache, that I've had ever since this morning, and which pulls my mouth all on one side; it makes me look as if I were laughing, though I don't feel much inclined. Oh—h!"

At this barefaced fib his schoolfellows could not keep their countenance, for the Fairy Grignotte became very busy. The laugh, therefore, was sudden and general. Sammy, Sammy himself, felt that the nails in his boots were no longer sufficient to save him. He burst out too; and his mirth was the greater because it was of such rare occurrence. It was a regular countryman's guffaw; a perfect leaden gaiety, which fell plump upon the master's senses like an insult.

"What, you too, sir! you join in this stupid laughter!" cried the poor master, in a state of distraction that it were vain to describe; and in his anger he walked up and down, he twisted and turned, and each time displayed that broad white back which was the cause of their present trouble, and which grew whiter every moment.

The more he moved about, the more the boys laughed; for the Fairy Grignotte was leaping about among them as only she could do.

At last, no longer able to bear it, the master resolved to take an extreme resolution.

"Young gentlemen," he cried out, "so much insubordination deserves a striking punishment: the whole school is kept in for the third time! Not one of you shall go out next holiday; not one: do you hear that?"

At these words the indignant master left the room. But as the Fairy Grignotte, frightened at his big voice, had run back into her hole, the boys at once left off laughing; and the white back, which he turned to them as he went out, could not excite another smile.

The greatest consternation was felt among the scholars: it was now two Saturdays that they had not been out, that they had not seen their parents; and it was easy for them to imagine how annoyed those good parents would feel at finding their children kept in for the third time.

The little fellows, as they thought over these things, began to cry, because they were the most innocent among the sufferers; the bigger ones, on the contrary, went into a great rage, because they were the most guilty.

When people are in the wrong, they are always very happy to lay the blame on somebody, or something; and now the very boys who were the first to deny that such a being as the Fairy Grignotte existed, were among the foremost to have no doubt at all about the matter, since they had so fine an opportunity to accuse her.

Scarce had the master left the room when their anger found a vent.

"Grignotte!" they cried, with their fists in the air, "wicked Grignotte! you are at the bottom of all the mischief!"

These words were a signal for a general revolt.

"Yes," said Richmond, who, we may observe, was one of the ringleaders of the school, "it is Grig-

notte,—I am sure of it; I felt something push my legs while the master was talking."

"Why, it was I who did that," said the same sharp little boy we before mentioned, and who did not understand it was necessary to tell an untruth in order to accuse any one; and who, besides, felt already a kind of affection for Grignotte.

"O, it was you, was it?" replied Richmond, annoyed at having his speech thus interrupted. "Well, take that, then, to teach you not to touch my legs another time!" accompanying the words with a slap over the sharp little boy's ear.

Then, his rage having acquired strength from this incident, he jumped upon a desk, and cried out:

" Vengeance!"

And all his companions repeated:

"VENGEANCE!"

Then there was a perfect storm of abuse against the unfortunate Grignotte: each, according to his feelings, called her by some name; and, as they were some thirty in all, you may conceive what an uproar there was,—nothing but Grignotte, Grignotte, resounded on all sides.

- "Nasty Grignotte!"
- "Infamous Grignotte!"
- "Abominable Grignotte!"
- "Perfidious Grignotte!"
- "Ugly Grignotte!"
- "Grignotte the Thief!"
- "Grignotte the Hypocrite!"
- "Spiteful little Grignotte!"
- "Naughty Grignotte!"

- "Grignotty Grignotte!"
- "Cunning Grignotte!"
- "Grignotte the Sneak!"
- "Grignotte the Flirt!" exclaimed at last a youth of sixteen, to whom this name, perhaps for reasons known to himself, was the greatest of insults.

When their abuse was exhausted, their regrets began. Each called to mind the treat which had been promised him for that unlucky Saturday,—that third and fatal holiday, which they were again condemned to pass at school.

- "Saturday!" cried one, "why it's just the day of the fête at St. Cloud; mamma was to have taken me there!"
- "Saturday!" cried another, "it's my aunt's birthday; and we were to have spent the afternoon with her!"
 - "And papa was going to take me to the Circus!"
 - "And me to the Botanical Gardens!"
 - "And me for a ride!"
- "And me to shoot with the gun my uncle gave me!"
 - "And me to see my brother's pony!"
- "And me to my grandpapa's, who was going to give me a watch!"
- "And me to see mamma, who is ill in the country!"
 - "And my sister, who is going to be married!"
 - "And my guardian, too, gone to London!"

This was the eldest pupil again, the one sixteen years old, who said that. For this ungrateful boy was never so happy as when his guardian was away.

But I should never have done, if I tried to tell you all the regrets which the punishment thus inflicted on these children produced in their hearts: let me rather go on to relate their revenge.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRISONER.

THE finest talker in the school now got upon his legs, and declared that there was not a moment to be lost: that they must, at every cost, get possession of Grignotte; that they should have no rest till Grignotte was caught; that catching Grignotte alone could mollify the master's anger.

"Our master is too just," he concluded, in a tone loud enough for him to hear, which he no doubt wished he would,—" too just to punish us for another's crime. I don't the least doubt, as soon as he learns that Grignotte only is guilty, he will forgive us, and all his anger will fall on her alone."

At this speech the pupils clapped their hands, and the orator took advantage of their enthusiasm to make a collection; or, in other words, he asked for sufficient money to buy a little bacon and a mousetrap. Each boy paid down a penny; so that there was soon collected enough to purchase wherewith to catch every mouse in the neighbourhood, and some famous big rats into the bargain.

It was now Wednesday, so that they had two

good days before them to take all the various measures which were required to restore to the school-boys their Saturday's holiday.

The plot was complete: the mousetrap was bought; the very bacon was already grilled; the boys, in order the better to allure the poor fairy, scattered bread-crumbs on the floor. It was pitiful to see such a host of enemies, so much hatred, for such a tiny little mouse.

Poor Grignotte knew nothing of these snares. Since the hour of the master's outburst of anger, when she scampered away, she had been hiding in an "Establishment for Young Ladies," where she had been committing a very world of follies; for little girls are even more fond of giggling than little boys are.

Seeing peace re-established among the scholars, Grignotte, however, returned on Thursday evening to sleep at her favourite hole, very far from suspecting the trap which had been laid for her.

When she hopped into the schoolroom, there was no one there; for all the pupils had already gone to bed. The mouse ran about under the forms, and finding so many crumbs on the ground, was very agreeably surprised; and as she picked up the little bits without danger, never imagined there was a snare behind. From crumb to crumb, she at last reached the treacherous slice of bacon, of which—imprudent fairy that she was!—she had not the least suspicion.

Scarcely, however, had she tasted the deceptive dainty when she heard a terrible noise—terrible in-

deed for a mouse—that of a spring going off. Alas, the trap had fulfilled its purpose—and the mouse was caught!

The poor fairy at that moment was as unhappy as any common mouse could be; for she was but a fairy of the second order, and possessed no real power.

Her mission upon earth was to make people laugh; a very poor mission, after all, and not a very useful one.

She felt at once the whole extent of her misfortune, and passed the livelong night in tears and in despair.

Next morning, when the boys found her in the trap, they could scarce contain themselves for joy. Their joy, indeed, was ferocious,—the joy of triumphant guilt.

"Call the cat. Where's Puss? Puss! Puss! Puss!" cried they, to frighten her more; for it is the very instinct of cruelty which urges us to call out in the hearing of our victim for the poor creature's greatest enemy,—in fact, it is the cruelest of insults.

They placed the mousetrap on a desk; and all the boys having clambered on to the forms, prepared to judge Grignotte.

In the first place they made known all their causes of complaint; and there was a tolerably long list: the poor fairy trembled as she listened to them. A good many mischievous little fellows threatened her with their fists; others stared at her till their eyes seemed starting from their heads, to her very great terror; some called her all sorts of disagree-

able names, and some, gay in the midst of their cruelty, paid her ironical compliments.

"Only look, how pretty she is!" they said. "Poor little thing, I quite pity her!"

The sharp little boy, who thought they were sincere in the interest they expressed for the prisoner, and not knowing as yet what irony was, took their hypocritical words for pure truth, and added his sincere and simple pity to their perfidious compassion.

"Isn't she very pretty?" he exclaimed; "she looks like a little rabbit!"

Poor child! his feeling only procured him another rap across the head.

Their master, however, was soon expected in; they must be quick, and force Mrs. Mouse to confess her crime.

"We will give you up to our master," said Sammy to the unhappy fairy; "his wife has got a cat that will soon pass judgment on you."

"Ah, the cat! the cat!" they all cried out again;—even our sharp little boy, who was afraid of getting another rap if he said a word to the contrary.

"Gentlemen," said the fairy, "be kind enough to listen to me. I confess that I have been very guilty in getting you all into such scrapes; I will not even try to excuse myself. Alas! I know too well it is not they who suffer for our faults who can find excuses for them. I acknowledge mine; but I do not appeal to your clemency, I appeal to your reason; it is in the name of your own interest that

" Only look, how pretty she is !" they said. " Poor little thing, I quite pity her!"

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I now speak. If you accuse me to your master, he will not believe you. Your cruelty will be useless, whilst your pity may be of service to you."

"Well, perhaps so," said one of her judges, who was somewhat softened by her argument; " if we grant you your life, will you faithfully promise never to make us laugh again?"

"Alas! how could I ever make a promise which it would be impossible for me to keep? Have confidence in me; I cannot promise not to make you laugh any more, but I do engage that you shall never get scolded again through me. Will that content you?"

"I'm quite satisfied," exclaimed one of the boys; "for it isn't that I wish to leave off laughing—what I hate is, always to be kept in."

"Let me alone," added the fairy; "not only shall you not be scolded in future, but all your past faults shall be forgiven, and I promise you that you shall have your Saturday's holiday after all."

"What! shall we go out on Saturday?" they all exclaimed together.

"Yes, I promise it, on the word of a mouse and a fairy."

The children, in a sudden revulsion of feeling, at once changed their hatred for enthusiastic joy; they carried the fairy in triumph in the mousetrap, and at once set her at liberty.

Then, giving themselves up to hope with the same readiness as they had previously yielded to their regrets, they recommenced their acclamations, and sang in chorus:

"We shall go out on Saturday;
We shall go out on Saturday;
We shall go out on Saturday;
Saturday, Saturday, Saturday!"

- "And I shall go to the fête at St. Cloud!"
- "And I to see my aunt on her birthday!"
- "And I shall go to the Circus with papa!"
- " And I to the Botanical Gardens!"
- "And I to have my ride!"
- "And I shall have some fun with my gun!"
- "And I shall have a gallop on my brother's pony!"
- "And I shall take a walk in the Tuileries with my watch!"
 - "And I shall go to my sister's wedding!"
- "And I shall go and see mamma in the country!"
- "And I shall go out for a walk all alone, without my guardian!"

CHAPTER IV.

A MOUSE'S DEVICE.

But this great hope began to slip away. Friday afternoon had come, and the boys had not obtained their pardon. They began to mistrust their late prisoner, and even to repent their elemency.

The little fairy had no time to lose, if she intended to execute her project. She did intend it,

and was meditating over the means of doing so in silence; she was waiting for a favourable opportunity. Although very young, and more than that, only a mouse, she knew that on the *proper time* alone depends the success of revolutions; and she waited, with the patience of a man of genius, till the moment of action should come.

All the boys were assembled in the dining-room; for it was supper-time. The servant had placed before each of them a plateful of bean broth, which did not look particularly attractive. The liquor was so thin, so colourless, and such a quantity of it, that it seemed almost as if it had been put under the pump. The unfortunate beans floated in it as if they were half-drowned.

Richmond, who, as we have said, was a sad Turk, after having pursued a solitary bean through the ocean of broth in vain, suddenly jumped up, and began taking off his coat. This unpolite action of course excited the master's attention, and he inquired with indignant surprise:

"What are you doing, sir? Why are you taking off your coat?"

"To jump into my broth and swim after my beans," answered Richmond, impertinently.

The master was about to go into a passion; but at that very instant Grignotte began tickling his legs; so that, instead of the expected outburst of anger, his mouth, with an effort, twisted into a smile.

Grignotte, encouraged by her success, played about him with all the energy she possessed, until the

master could contain himself no longer, but broke out into a hearty laugh, in which he was joined by the whole of his pupils.

His wife, who was a good-natured person, took advantage of his unusual mirth to ask him to forgive the poor scholars.

"How can you punish these children for laughing," she said, "when you yourself, a serious man and the father of a family, cannot keep your countenance? It would not be just to do so."

The master allowed himself to be overcome, and full pardon was granted to them on the spot. Then the scene which followed was a perfect intoxication of delight; they all cried out with one accord:

- "Long life to our good master!"
- " Long live Grignotte!"
- "Long live the Fairy Grignotte!"
- "Sweet Grignotte!"
- "Immortal Grignotte!"
- " Adorable Grignotte!"
- "Lovely Grignotte!"
- "Charming Grignotte!"
- " Love of a Grignotte!"
- "Darling Grignotte!"
- "Grignotte the Favourite!"
- "Grignotte for ever!"

And all sorts of Grignottes besides.

And since that time Grignotte has become the children's friend.

LA DANSE, N'EST PAS CE QUE J'AIME.*

CHAPTER I.

THE CHILD'S BALL.

AGLAURE BREMONT was a sprightly and goodnatured little girl; but she had a defect which rendered her so common, and sometimes so disagreeable, that people could not listen to her with patience. This consisted in such an exaggerated style of talking, that she made every body laugh at her. She would say, for instance:

"I could walk from here to Orleans without stopping;" although it was between eighty and ninety miles from Orleans to Paris.

Or she would remark:

"I shall get up very early to-morrow, and shall write twelve English verbs before breakfast."

Her father, annoyed at this ridiculous defect, resolved to correct it. One day, on his hearing her call out in her usual style:

- "O, I do love dancing so! I could dance
- * This is the name of an old French song. Of course most of our young readers know that it means in English,—

"I don't love dancing; no, not I."

three days and three nights without being tired;" he took her at her word, and ordered that preparations should be made in the house for a great ball.

Aglaure, enchanted at the idea, passed great part of the time which preceded the day of the party in practising her steps, in making genteel curtseys, and torturing her feet into all sorts of positions, in order to make the better figure. At length the great day arrived.

At noon her maid came into her room, bringing on her arm an elegant ball-dress, which her father had ordered for her; and begging her to make haste, because the musicians had already arrived, and the ball would soon begin. Aglaure would not believe what the girl reported; she ran to her father to get an explanation.

"Is it true that the ball is to begin at noon?" she inquired.

"Yes, my dear," replied Mr. Bremont, "the ladies wished the ball to commence early because of their children, who cannot sit up late; but you, my love, who are so fond of dancing, can remain up and join the ball of the elders, if it amuses you."

Aglaure considered these reasons perfectly natural, and she thanked her papa for the favour he was granting her, very far from suspecting that it was only a trick.

She ran up quickly to her own room, dressed herself in all haste, and was the first to reach the drawing-room.

All the shutters were closed, as if it were already night; and yet the sun managed to peep through the chinks and curtains. The little friends and cousins of Aglaure were not long in making their appearance; and the room was shortly filled with children of all ages, who were skipping and running about in every direction, and made such a noise and such a dust, that there was no hearing or seeing any thing.

Aglaure leaped higher than any of her playfellows; she inspired them with her own gaiety. Never had she been so much amused. She did not lose her time in talking or sitting down, I assure you; she was not still for a single instant. No squirrel ever appeared more nimble. Her papa watched her from time to time, and smiled as he thought how all this would end.

The children skipped and ran about in this way till eight o'clock in the evening; then, a fine buffet being spread, all rushed into the refreshment-room. Ah, they really deserved the treat which was prepared for them, by all the exercise they had gone through.

Aglaure, who had been jumping about like a little mad thing, was very hungry; and she was walking up to the refreshments, all spread out for the children, in order to do the honours, and also perhaps to do honour to the good things themselves. But just at the moment when she was going to sit down, her father stopped her.

"The grand ball is just beginning; they are waiting for you, my dear; go in, then; for remember it is no longer a question of running about with children like a little girl; you must now figure

in the stately country-dance, and prove to your master that you have profited by his lessons."

Aglaure walked sadly away, casting as she went a farewell look at the table, and all the delicacies which covered it. She saw with considerable envy the way in which the little boys were stuffing themselves with buns and biscuits, macaroons and cakes of every kind; there was one particularly who ate so much, and was in such a state of happiness, that he was almost choked.

She was forced to leave that delightful buffet, and go to begin all over again a new ball, before she had been able to sit down for a single moment to rest after the first—not even for supper. It was very severe: but Aglaure remembered having said that she could dance three days and three nights without being tired; now she had not danced for one day yet; and Aglaure was much too proud to give in.

CHAPTER II.

THE GRAND BALL.

On entering the ballroom, she was struck with the beautiful appearance that it presented. Aglaure, who was scarce twelve years of age, had never as yet seen any other fête than little village entertainments and a few children's balls; it was the first time that she saw so many lustres, so much gilding, so many wax candles, and such a profusion of flowers.

She was at first quite dazzled; she was so proud to be admitted to a true ball,—that alone made her four years older, which in itself was delightful.

She suddenly conceived a most supreme contempt for her little playfellows, who had remained behind in the other room eating their little cakes, like noisy children, who only interfere with the pleasures of grown-up people, and bedaub the gilded furniture of a drawing-room with sweets. How proud she was to be no longer with them! What disdain she felt for that buffet of the little creatures, for those miserable cakes, which a short time before had constituted the object of her envy! she no longer understood how she could have regretted these things for a single moment. A very few minutes had sufficed to produce all this change in her ideas, in her manners, and, I may say, in her whole person. Those who had seen her just before, leaping and skipping with the other children, scarcely knew her again; she had become so serious, so dull, and sat so excessively upright.

She did her best to put on a very grave look, in order to make herself seem older; which was the cause that a good many people who knew nothing of her or her feelings set her down as very sulky, and thought she had been scolded. She was not in a bad humour either, quite the reverse; she had never been prouder or more happy.

What were her feelings, then, when a tall young man, dressed in black, with a fashionable waistcoat, an eyeglass, and white gloves, came up and seriously begged her to dance with him; particularly when, bowing with respect, he uttered the usual ceremonious words:

"Pray, miss, will you do me the honour to dance the first country-dance with me?"

Aglaure was so flattered that she could scarce reply—

"Yes, sir, with pleasure."

With pleasure! that was sincere enough at least. Aglaure was going at last to dance in good earnest, and with a proper dancer,—a young man who wore white gloves, a partner who said to her:

"Pray, miss, will you do me the honour to dance the first country-dance with me?"—and not with a tiresome little *urchin* who called out to her from one end of the room to the other:

"I say, Cousin Aglaure, come and dance with me, will you?"

How improper did such a mode of inviting her appear to her now!

CHAPTER III.

THE EIGHT PARTNERS.

AGLAURE was so self-satisfied, that she no longer perceived she was tired.

She danced very well, with a good deal of grace; and as the company admired her, and success gives strength, she positively forgot that she had been jumping about since midday; she appeared not to have done more than danced her first quadrille. Vanity does prodigies; it would give agility to a person with the gout;—yes, I feel satisfied that if a gouty person were told for a long time together that he danced well, he would be jumping up to show-off his steps. What I can very safely affirm is, that Aglaure would have wished to go to bed very early that evening if she had not been admired; for she could not help secretly feeling that she had had quite enough of it.

The more people looked at her, the more animated she became, and the more upright she sat; she turned her toes out so much, that she was more than once in danger of going on to her nose.

"You are very fond of dancing, miss?" said her partner in an inquiring tone.

" 0, yes, sir."

" No wonder, for you dance admirably."

At this she put her toes out to such a degree, that if she had not been caught hold of she would have gone down.

"The carpet is very slippery," observed her partner; then, the quadrille being over, he took her to a seat.

At once another gentleman came to ask her to dance; then a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth. She no longer knew how to manage; it was of no use her answering, "I am engaged."—" The following one then," would be the reply. There were no means of escaping a single one.

Six quadrilles in perspective, when she had already danced at least a dozen; for she had been dancing since noon! Really she began to consider it hard work. But the gentlemen thought she looked so pretty when she was dancing, that it was impossible to refuse. Vanity grants no mercy: she insists on conquest! conquest! always conquest! even if we should die under it.

The two quadrilles which followed were not so troublesome: Aglaure took less pains to sit so upright; she was less solicitous about putting her toes out, and she only looked the more graceful in consequence.

The fourth quadrille was less agreeable. Aglaure had for a partner a short gentleman who was very fat and very red and very puffy, and who blew his nose very vigorously every two minutes to refresh himself.

"You are very fond of dancing, miss," he said in a broken voice; "so am I," he added, without waiting for her answer; "but at Paris they dance too fast,—it chokes one. Down in the country they waltz very gently, and that is much less tiring, I assure you. I have only danced four quadrilles this evening; and yet,—I must confess it,—I am quite done up!"

These words reminded Aglaure how "done up," to use her country partner's phrase, she ought to be herself; and as she thought, her courage began to waver.

The fifth partner was a tall, thin, melancholy young man, who walked with a measured step rather than danced, and who seemed to be fulfilling some duty rather than giving himself up to amuse-

ment, and whose resigned air appeared to say: "I was forced, you see, to invite the young lady of the house, as I have been introduced here as a dancing man."

He considered himself also obliged to say a few words of politeness to Aglaure, so he remarked:

"You are very fond of dancing, miss?"

"Very, sir," she replied, as she turned her head; and her partner did not attempt to continue the conversation.

Her sixth partner was a German, who said to her:

"I zee dat you luff ferry much to tanse, meess?" The seventh was an Italian, who said:

" Please you de dance?"

The eighth was an Englishman, who also inquired, but in a very quick tone, whether she was fond of "that sort of thing."

And Aglaure set about inquiring of herself why all her partners—French, German, Italian, and English—made the same observation to her: the truth was, in such society people had nothing else to say to a little girl twelve years of age. One can converse with a young lady some years older about the books she has read, the last opera she has seen, music, painting, the people she knows; but what is there to say to a little girl? When a man is not intimately acquainted with her dolls, he positively can find nothing to talk about.

CHAPTER IV.

THE THIRTIETH QUADRILLE.

AGLAURE, disenchanted, began to get disgusted with the dancing in proportion as the company ceased to admire her, and her partners appeared less amiable in her eyes; she almost thought with regret of her roguish little cousins, who really would say funny things that almost made her burst with laughter.

Exhausted with fatigue, she began to be annoyed, and sought for a pretext to slip away, when a friend of her father's, a retired colonel, about forty-five years of age, having perceived her, came up smiling, and in a hearty tone exclaimed:

"Ah, here you are, my pretty little Aglaure; dear me, how you have grown! I must do something extraordinary in your favour; I will positively have a dance with you: only think, for fifteen years I have not done such a thing. Come along, then: I hear the fiddles scraping, we have not a moment to lose."

Aglaure was, of course, obliged to follow him; but she was not in such a hurry as he to get into place.

The poor child would not, however, think of disobliging her father's old friend by refusing to dance with him; he had always been so kind to her that she loved him dearly; so that, tired as she was, the desire to please a friend still kept her up,



He danced with all his heart. Digitized by Goog[e]

- as vanity had done before; and she therefore this time again found courage to dance.

This quadrille was, however, a perfect torture; for her old partner, taking advantage of the familiarity permitted to an old friend, did not allow Aglaure one moment's rest; he did not let her off a single figure, so proud was he to show that he remembered them. He danced with all his heart; he had put on his green gloves to look like a young man, and had taken off his blue spectacles. Each time when the word was given to balancer, instead of half a turn he took a dozen whole ones; and poor Aglaure felt so giddy that she thought she should be sick.

Her father, seeing her so exhausted, took pity on her:

"It will soon be one o'clock, my dear," he said; "you ought to think of giving up; I fear you must be rather tired."

But Aglaure, who observed her father's meaning smile as he said the words, held herself up at once and replied:

"O, no, indeed, papa; I am ready to dance all night."

Mr. Bremont, in order to give her a few minutes' rest, desired the musicians to play a waltz: as Aglaure did not as yet know how to waltz, she was able to sit down for a short time.

Her great hope was that the dancers would forget her, or that a good many of them would be forced to go and take home their sisters and mammas; for some of the young ladies had already left.

Aglaure saw them depart with envy; whilst they were putting on their cloaks and taking their leave.

"How happy they are," thought she, " to be

going home to bed and to sleep!"

Each time she accompanied a lady to the anteroom, she lengthened out the complimentary adieux, trusting each time that, the quadrilles having begun, she could be left out of one at least: but the gentlemen were implacable; they pursued her even to the anteroom, and pitilessly led her to her place.

The noisy and continuous strains of music, joined to the fatigue which weighed upon her, began positively to stupify her brain: every thing appeared to go round; her eyes seemed to swim in a kind of mist. The feeling of drowsiness, to which she refused to yield, benumbed her thoughts, and she found herself more than once in a state of bewilderment as to where she was. That eternal dance appeared to her a painful nightmare, from which she could not escape. She experienced a feeling of oppression. These fatiguing words resounded like a sentence of condemnation in her ears:

- "A vos places."
- " Chaîne anglaise."
- " Balancez à vos dames."
- " En avant deux."
- " La main droite."
- " Queue du chat."
- " Pastourelle."
- " Chassez les huit."

She would sometimes take refuge on a sofa in a pretty boudoir which was at the end of the suite

of those splendid saloons; and there she would do her best to get a little repose. But she was soon roused out of her half-slumber by those terrible words:

"I have found a vis-à-vis, miss; the quadrille is now formed."

And then recommenced that odious singsong-

- "Chaîne anglaise."
- "Balancez à vos dames."
- "En avant deux."
- " La main droite."
- " Queue du chat."
- " Pastourelle."
- " Chassez les huit."

Sometimes also Aglaure went to join her father, who was playing whist in the small drawing-room: on these occasions she assumed a sprightly look, and as she came up to him inquired:

- "Are you lucky this evening at play?"
- "Yes, my dear," Mr. Bremont answered; "but how is it you are not yet in bed?"
 - "O, I am amusing myself so much."

Then a fresh partner would come and look for her, and she had to return to listen to the same wearisome—

- " Chaîne anglaise."
- " Balancez à vos dames."
- " En avant deux."
- " La main droite."
- " Queue du chat."
- " Pastourelle."
- " Chassez les huit."

This last phrase was the only one she heard with any thing like satisfaction; at least it was the end of it, and was the herald of a moment's rest.

CHAPTER V.

A LITTLE FATIGUE.

It was now four in the morning, and the springtime of the year; so that daylight began to peep in.

A window which looked upon the street had been opened; it was in one of the large reception-rooms, now deserted. Aglaure crept in, and threw herself down on a settee placed within the window, and looked sadly into the street.

"It was broad day when the child's ball began," she thought; "night has passed away, and another day has come, and yet I must still dance!"

But then she remembered having said that she could dance "three days and three nights" without being tired, and she considered herself very ridiculous to have said so.

However, seeing that the ball was nearly over, she resolved to make yet another courageous effort, and keep up till every body had left.

"When the musicians are all gone," she said, "they are not likely to force me to dance any more."

"And what was it that forced you, silly little thing that you are, but your own pride and obstinacy?" That is what I should have answered her, if I had been by; but, I must confess the truth, I was not invited to this ball.

Several milk-women had now come up the street with their little carts, and were greatly put out at seeing the carriages blocking up the thoroughfare.

"Must people go to bed so late," they exclaimed,
"and yet interfere with poor people who have their
work to do? can't they amuse themselves without
blocking up the street?"

Aglaure heard these words, and could not help thinking:

"If we could be said to find any amusement in it!"

The fresh morning air seemed to take entire possession of her senses, and benumbed her to such a degree, that the sound of the music only came upon her brain like a distant hum, which grew gradually weaker. Still the fatal words resounded in her ears:

- " Chaîne anglaise."
- " Balancez à vos dames."
- " En avant deux."
- " La main droite."
- " Queue du chat."
- " Pastourelle."
- "Chassez les huit."

But they brought no meaning to Aglaure's senses. She was now kneeling on the settee, with both her arms resting upon the stone coping, for the purpose of supporting herself and seeing further into the street; insensibly her head drooped, fell

upon her hands, and Aglaure was in a profound sleep. The motion she made in leaning her head forward unfastened her hair; the comb which had been placed to keep it up fell over into the street, and with it went a little flower which composed her headdress.

The gentleman with whom she was to dance the last quadrille sought after her for some time; but he could not find her, for she was hidden by the window-curtains that were closed behind her. Aglaure remained fast asleep upon the window-sill the whole time they were dancing the cotillon.

Her father, no longer seeing her in the ballroom, fancied she had gone to bed, and thought, no doubt, she must be terribly in want of rest.

Aglaure's sleep was so profound, that she did not feel the cold stone penetrate through her white gloves, which alone protected her arms; she did not hear the rattle in the streets, although it was every moment becoming greater.

She would perhaps have remained there for some hours, had not a young carpenter, going to his work, remarked upon the pavement a comb with the teeth broken and scattered about, and a pretty little artificial flower, which did not seem as if it had lain there long.

By a very natural impulse he looked up at the house, and at the window from which these things must have fallen. And then he saw long tresses of hair hanging from the coping.

Frightened at this sight, he drew back a few steps, and saw Aglaure sleeping on the windowsill. As she was quite motionless, and her hair so disordered, and he had got his head full of romance from going often to the theatre to see melodramas, he had not the slightest doubt that she was dead,—perhaps even murdered;—who could tell?

He knocked at the door, and roused up the por-

tress, who was dosing over the stove.

The portress woke up the lady's-maid, who was fast asleep in an arm-chair.

"Something is the matter in your house," said the young carpenter; but the lady's-maid only stretched her arms and yawned, evidently not understanding what was said to her.

"There's something terrible the matter in your house," repeated the carpenter, angry at their indifference;—"a murder!" he added, in order to produce more effect.

"A murder?" repeated the portress with emphasis.

"Yes," he replied; "a young lady has been murdered during the ball."

(This was in the true melodramatic style.)

"O, my goodness gracious!" cried the lady's-maid, "that must be Miss Aglaure; I've been waiting for her all night to put her to bed, and she has not come."

The lady's-maid now rushed into the ballroom in a dreadful state of agitation.

"Sir, sir," she exclaimed to Mr. Bremont, "a great accident has occurred during the ball: Miss Aglaure—"

"My daughter!—what is it?" cried out Mr. Bremont, in an anxious tone.

"Yes, sir; a man has seen her—the window—in a swoon. I say in a swoon," she added in a lower tone to the guests, "because I don't want to frighten my master."

At these words, the whole of the company still left in the room became alarmed; dancing was at once given over; and ladies and gentlemen ran to the windows of the different rooms and drew back the curtains in a twinkling.

"Here she is! here she is!" cried out one of the dancers who had assisted to murder poor Aglaure; and every one rushed to the spot.

"She is kneeling," said one.

"She is fast asleep," said another.

"She has fainted away," cried the lady's-maid;
we must bring her to."

"Do nothing of the sort," exclaimed Mr. Bremont in his turn; "let her, on the contrary, sleep as long as she will. She wants rest, I assure you; and I have little doubt but that you will be able to carry her off to bed without waking her."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CORRECTION.

Castigat ridendo mores.

MR. BREMONT was right; the little girl, still fast asleep, was carried to her room, undressed, and put into bed, without showing the least sign of waking up.

Next day, at five o'clock in the afternoon, and just dinner-time, and still Aglaure was sleeping; then, however, they woke her, for it was time to think of getting up.

Her papa and her cousins, who were assembled in the dining-room, were waiting her arrival with impatience. As soon as she came hobbling in, she was received with bursts of laughter; and poor Aglaure, perfectly ashamed, turned to leave the room.

"Come here, my child," said Mr. Bremont, "and do not cry; I feel sure that you are corrected."

"O, yes," said Aglaure, sobbing; "I never will dance any more in my life."

"Take care," Mr. Bremont replied with a smile; "this is exaggeration again: do not be hasty to give up dancing for ever; in a year's time you will perhaps be fonder of it than you think."

"Aglaure," said one of her cousins, a little girl about her own age, and a sad quiz, "won't you come this evening to Madame de Volnar's dancing-party?—they say it will be delightful!"

"Unkind girl," answered Aglaure, in a sorrowful tone, "you know I can scarcely stand."

"Come, come, young ladies," observed Mr. Bremont, as he kissed his daughter, "do not tease her any more; let us forget this matter: I promise you that my little girl will not fall so easily again into her old error."

The conversation was then changed; but that quiz of a cousin, having been asked to play some-

thing, sat down to the piano and rattled off the old tune: "La danse, n'est pas ce que j'aime"—("I don't love dancing; no, not I").

The whole family laughed at this appropriate sally. The pleasantry was ever after adopted by the Bremonts; the old air became a saying; and whenever Aglaure felt tempted to fall into her habit of exaggeration, they had but to sing, "La danse, n'est plus ce que j'aime," to make her correct the extravagance.

We may learn, my dear children, from this tale that exaggeration is a vulgar defect; and that it would be a good way to correct people who use it in their conversation, and in their opinions, if we could force them to keep their ridiculous promises.

THE FLYING DOG.

CHAPTER I.

DOGS AND BIRDS.

THE Princess of Valencourt was a great lady very well known in Paris. The most wonderful stories were told of her, about eminent services rendered by her to her friends, such as are scarce known in these days: tales of people condemned to death, saved by her power in a way which seemed miraculous; and a hundred things of the same kind, which the vulgar could scarce understand. So that little minds, who do not like to be astonished, and want every thing explained, even that which is impossible, found it more convenient to consider her a fairy.

"She is a fairy," they said; and that explained every thing.

This princess had, at some little distance from Paris, a splendid mansion, where she spent the whole year, and which contained a quantity of wonders. There were pianos which played beautiful tunes all by themselves; invisible singers suddenly heard in the air, without its being perceived where the voices came from; flowers which

bloomed the entire year, without a single gardener even thinking of watering them. I should never have done, were I to repeat all the things they related of that palace of delights.

Among the beauties of this place, that which most attracted the attention of travellers was an admirable aviary, wherein existed the rarest and the prettiest birds that the whole world could produce. Their wings, radiant with purple and gold and azure, dazzled the eyes; and their warbled notes, though very different to each other, seemed to harmonise for the sole purpose of charming the ear. They clung by hundreds to the gay bars of their gilded cage; and when they stopped there motionless, the whole aviary looked like an immense piece of canvas embroidered with birds of every colour.

People admired also the beautiful hunting-equipments of this wealthy princess, and her numerous packs, composed of dogs of every kind—greyhounds, terriers, pointers, setters, dogs from Newfoundland, English dogs, Turkish dogs,—indeed, dogs from every land. The greatest possible care was taken of these gentlemen, who were lodged in a superb kennel.

The princess, who was very generous, often made her friends a present of the pups of these dogs; and it was delightful to see what court they paid to her in order to obtain one. These dogs were brought up like the sons of kings: each separate animal had his tutor, who taught him all the sciences,—that is, all those it is a dog's province to study,—



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such as sporting, hunting, dancing; the arts of fetching and carrying, shutting a door with their paws, going through their drill with a stick like recruits, and a great many other talents besides.

The children of the princess's friends were never backward in accepting an invitation to go and pay her a visit; they amused themselves immensely in her garden, in looking at the birds and making the dogs dance. Every holiday, when he could leave school, Leon de Cherville went off to the country-seat of the fairy-princess with his mamma, and never came back to Paris at night without tears in his eyes; no one, indeed, could quit that beautiful spot without regret.

On one of these occasions,—it was near the vacation, and after the prizes had been distributed,—Leon went off to the mansion.

"I am very pleased with you, Leon," the princess said to him benevolently; "you have got two prizes this year: it is truly a great success; and I myself will bestow a reward upon you."

The fairy at these words took him into her garden, and stopping before the great aviary,—

"Look at these birds," she said; "I will give you which ever one you like best."

Leon then leaped for joy and clapped his hands, almost devouring the various birds with his eyes.

Just at this time it was the hour for the dogs to be taken out; they came one by one out of their kennels, each held in a leash by the tutor who had charge of him.

Leon had scarce perceived them when he ran up

to them, and began to fondle and play with some of his favourites.

- "Ah, you prefer dogs?" said the princess; "if so, I will give you one instead."
 - "Ah, but I like birds too," answered Leon.
- "Well, you may have just which you please; so take your choice. Which shall it be,—a dog or a bird?"
- "I should like both," the boy replied with a smile.
- "What! a dog and a bird?" cried Madame de Cherville; "that is too much, my dear; you can't take care of both of them at once; and besides, they are not likely to agree very well together: choose, for that is all I can allow."

Leon pouted his lip a little, which was not a very amiable thing for him to do.

He returned to the aviary, and looked at all the birds; then he went back to the front of the kennel and looked at the dogs, without being able to come to a decision.

The princess laughed at his uncertainty, and the torture he was suffering. In truth, it is a great one to have to choose between two things one likes equally well.

"Leon," said the fairy, "I'll leave you till to-morrow to come to a decision; you shall come and breakfast with me without mamma, who does not get up quite so early as you do, and I am sure we shall understand each other perfectly."

The princess accompanied these words with a little smile, which Leon interpreted favourably.

Mystery for spoiled children is always brilliant with hope.

CHAPTER II.

STILL UNDECIDED.

NEXT morning, as early as four o'clock, Leon got up; so impatient was he to see the fairy again. Every one was still fast asleep at the mansion when he reached it: true he had not far to go; for during the vacation he was staying with his mamma at her country-house, at no great distance from the princess's seat.

Whilst Leon was waiting for the princess to come out of her chamber, he recommenced his undecided runs from the kennel to the aviary, and from the aviary to the kennel.

"What beautiful wings that red bird has!" he thought. "O, yes, I must have a bird!"

Then the moment after,—

"It is so amusing to have a dog," he said, "following you about every where, fondling you, fetching things for you, and shouldering a stick: whilst a bird, after all, is good for nothing; he sings in his cage, and that's all!"

But soon after he would say again:

"That's very true; but it is so common to have a dog: any body can have a dog; but every body cannot have a beautiful bird, which comes from abroad!" The princess surprised him still in this uncertainty.

"Well, Leon," said she, "have you decided?"

"Yes, madame; I wish for a bird."

"Indeed! do you not prefer a dog? I have one that is so very intelligent."

"Then I will have him; you are right, I do prefer a dog."

The fairy laughed; and during all breakfasttime she amused herself with the child's indecision.

A footman, coming up to Leon, said:

"Will you take tea or coffee, sir?"

"Tea," replied Leon; but the moment after he corrected himself, and said:

"No, no, coffee; I like coffee better: I never take it at home. Yet tea,—but no—coffee."

And the footman during this time stood motionless with his large salver, waiting for Leon to make up his mind.

"Pour him out both tea and coffee," said the princess; "he has had a long walk this morning; he got up at four, and must be very hungry."

Leon was not a little surprised to find that the princess was informed of the hour he had risen; he called to mind also, that the evening before she had spoken to him about the two prizes he had gained at school without any body having said a word to her concerning the matter.

"She guesses every thing," he thought; "I never met such an extraordinary woman."

After breakfast the princess rose, and with a serious countenance said to Leon:

"Follow me!"

The child felt a presentiment that something strange was going to happen; for the princess generally spoke to him so playfully; but that solemn "Follow me" certainly meant something mysterious.

The fairy held a small ivory key in her hand, which she applied to a part of the wall, where, however, there was no trace of a lock; and at the same instant a door, up to that time invisible, flew open; at which Leon was not a little astonished.

He followed the princess down a long and narrow passage, which it took them a quarter of an hour to walk through. It was perfectly dark; but Leon felt no fear. At last he heard the noise of a key turning in a lock, and an instant after found himself in a splendid Chinese pavilion, placed on the bank of a river.

CHAPTER III.

SINGULAR FLOWERS.

THE sun lit up this pavilion on every side, and brought out the rich colour of the silk damask with which the walls of the splendid apartment were hung. Its eight windows, which let in the light and air, were adorned with splendid Japan vases filled with flowers and shrubs, the like of which Leon had never yet beheld, not even in the most celebrated conservatories.

"Dusky is not here," said the fairy, as she stepped into the summer-house; "he is waiting perhaps till he is called. Will you oblige me by ringing?" she added, addressing Leon.

But Leon looked on all sides, and could find no bell.

"Pull one of those flowers," continued the fairy, pointing out to Leon's attention a bunch of white bell-blossoms, which drooped gracefully from one of the branches of a beautiful shrub that the child contemplated with admiration.

Leon obeyed; but, pulling too vigorously, he shook the whole tree; and at the same instant such a thundering was heard, that the child drew back in great alarm.

The fairy, seeing his fright, tried to reassure him:

"That tree is unknown in this country," she said; "it is the growth of China; it is called the bell-lily on account of its flower, which gives forth sounds similar to those of a bell, the form of which it resembles. It is a very extraordinary plant. Don't be alarmed at it; come and examine it closely."

Leon drew near the great vase which contained this marvellous plant, and the fairy amused herself with sounding all the flowers one after the other. The large bells, which were full blown, had a powerful sound like those of a cathedral; the smaller ones, but half-opened, gave forth a deep sonorous dong, like a college-bell; whilst the buds, on the other hand, had the feeble and graceful tinkle of a sheep's-bell heard at evening on the mountains.

The fairy also called Leon's attention to several other plants, which were more extraordinary still. There was one, among others, called the *lobster-bush*; its leaves were light and well-defined, like those of parsley; and the flower, which was very long and red, with two little black spots which looked like eyes, bore a most striking resemblance to the form of a lobster. All the flowers were attached in a bunch to the stalk; and never was a plant more appropriately named.

A little further on was another shrub, with which Leon would very much have wished to stop and play: it was called the battledore with feathered flowers. The large leaves of this plant looked like true battledores; and its white and delicate flower was the prettiest little shuttlecock that ever child sent flying over into a neighbour's garden. It was impossible for a boy not to admire nature, when he saw she had been able to produce in the same plant both battledore and shuttlecock.

In a large Japan vase Leon remarked another shrub which amused him extremely; its flower was really most risible.

"This plant," said the fairy, "is the great capote, or hooded palm."

It had indeed the strangest appearance: its long straight stalk was crossed by horizontal branches, like a parrot's perch; but each of these branches had a large hook at its extremity. It was upon

these hooks that the flower hung; and this flower had precisely the form of a hood—a very little hood, although it was a big flower. There were some of all colours—pink, blue, yellow, red, lilac; there were enough upon this plant to furnish all the dolls of a toy-warehouse with a hood; and the display which a milliner makes in her showrooms can alone give you an idea of the appearance it presented.

Leon, charmed at so many wonders, amused himself for a long time with the various flowers, without observing a little negro, whom the sound of the first bell-ringing had called in.

"Dusky," said the fairy to her negro, as she confided to him the ivory key she had already made use of, and which, as it would appear, opened all sorts of locks, "go and open the golden niche, and bring hither the flying dog."

These words struck Leon's ears in spite of the noise of the bells, and absorbed his attention.

"The flying dog!" repeated he.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW UGLY HE IS!

"YES, my child," the fairy answered; "you could not make up your mind whether it should be a dog or a bird: I saw you could not possess one without very much regretting the other; that your mother

would not permit you to have both; so that, to arrange matters to your liking, I intend giving you a dog which is in fact a bird."

"Indeed!" cried Leon, in great surprise; "a dog which is a bird! how pretty he must be!"

And Leon pictured in his fancy an Italian greyhound with little wings; and already began debating whether he should have a house or a cage for him, when Dusky reappeared, leading in the

flying dog.

At sight of him Leon made a grimace which

was not very flattering for so rare an animal.

The fact is, the flying dog was horribly ugly. He was a big dog, with long ears; neither terrier, nor bull, nor spaniel, but something of all three; he was badly made, almost humped; carried his tail between his legs: and no one would ever have suspected from his hang-dog face that he was possessed of wings.

"There is your dog," said the fairy.

"He doesn't look much like a bird," answered Leon in no very satisfied tone.

"I see he does not make a very favourable impression on you," said the princess; "but tell me frankly, what defect do you find in him?"

Leon did not dare to say, "I consider him frightful;" but merely remarked, "I think him too big."

The fairy smiled; then said:

"Do not consider that as a defect; for presently you may think it an advantage."

Then the princess, having made a sign to the

little negro to draw near, spoke to him in some foreign language; upon which Dusky led the dog into the garden which surrounded the pavilion.

The fairy took Leon by the hand; both came out of the Chinese saloon, and went to sit upon a bench, in order to observe what was about to take place.

"I never saw an uglier dog in my life," thought Leon; "I should really and truly prefer a common canary. What am I to do with this wretched terrier, or spaniel, or whatever he is—for I don't even know what breed he belongs to?—There are such beautiful birds down there in the aviary! Why did I not make choice of a bird?"

Whilst busied with these reflections, the little negro had taken the flying dog into the middle of a large green lawn; and after having gently stroked it, sat down without more ado upon its back, as if it had been a horse.

The dog then pricked up its ears as if proud of being mounted; and both remained thus motion-less, waiting the princess's orders.

Dusky sat upright on the dog, and appeared no contemptible groom.

The fairy, seeing them both prepared, pronounced the magic word that the dog was waiting to hear before taking its flight;—I am not quite sure whether the word was magic, or if the dog was taught to go only when he heard it: this fact is not so certain; but it matters little.

" nasguette!"

cried the princess.



And at the same instant, most wonderful prodigy! the dog spread out huge wings, which his shaggy hair had hidden.

And at the same instant, most wonderful prodigy! the dog spread out huge wings, which his shaggy hair had hidden; his heavy eyes became sparkling as emeralds; his limbs extended with a majestic movement; his tail swelled out and curled gracefully upwards; his paws extended, his claws elongated,—they did not seem a mere dog's claws, but rather the talons of an eagle.

He rose and rose into the sky, noble and terrible, his large wings burring through the air, which they struck with measured and slow cadence; it was no longer a dog in aspect, but a phoenix or a condor!

Nothing could have been more imposing than this spectacle; no sight could have been finer than that presented by this animal, so full of ardour, soaring into space with pride, bearing upon his wings the swarthy boy, whose expressive head stood out in strong relief against the warm azure of the atmosphere. The little negro wore a collar of diamonds, which sparkled in the sun, and looked like some star; it was, indeed, as I have said, a marvellous spectacle.

Leon knew not what to say or think: he looked on; he admired; he was charmed; he grew uneasy; he knew not what he felt.

"Well," asked the fairy, seeing his surprise, "do you still think your dog is too big?"

"It is a bird!" answered Leon in an indignant tone, "and the finest bird in the world!"

"No matter; do you consider him too big?"

"O, no," answered Leon; "if he were smaller, how would it be possible to ride him?"

"Ah, ah!" said the fairy, "you see, then, that I was right: I warrant, you no longer consider him quite so ugly as he was."

"On the contrary, I have never seen any thing so admirable. It is not a dog; it is a prodigy."

CHAPTER V.

BOLDNESS.

LEON, following the flying dog with his eyes, as he soared into the upper air, waited with impatience for his descent, in order to try, in his turn, an aerial excursion.

The little negro seemed so accustomed to this style of travelling, that Leon did not for a moment imagine that there was the least danger in rising so high above the earth.

He was very delighted when he at last saw the dog by degrees slacken in his flight, and then gently descend towards the ground.

"If the dog is not too tired," said Leon to the good fairy, "I may try him too, madame, may I not?"

"Yes, my dear," the princess replied; "but, before you do so, I must teach you how to guide him; he only rises or descends on pronouncing

the two magic words which have alone the power to direct him. In order to make him rise, you must say to him twice:

NASGUETTE!

But when you want him to descend, you must say to him three times at least:

ALDABORO! ALDABORO! ALDABORO!

Otherwise you run the risk of remaining in the air your whole life, which would not be very pleasant."

Leon had the two magic words repeated to him many times: the first, that of "Nasguette," seemed easy to retain; but the second he remembered with difficulty; and it was even necessary for him to hear it said over very often before he could manage so much as to pronounce it.

During this study, the negro and the flying dog had reached the ground.

The flying dog had scarcely reached the lawn when Leon ran up to him and fondled him, bestowing on him a variety of tender epithets, such as one would naturally give to a dog and bird.

He wanted to make him go through his drill in the same way as any common dog would do; but the animal with wings evidently disdained those paltry tricks which could be performed by cobblers' dogs and others; and Leon ran to complain to the fairy of his obstinacy.

"You are ungrateful," said the princess, sadly;

"I give you a wonder, and you try to make a vulgarity of it! You really deserve that I should give your dog to one who is more worthy of him than yourself."

Leon acknowledged he was wrong.

After having allowed the flying dog time to get a good rest, he sat a-straddle upon his back, and bravely pronounced the magic word:

"NASGUETTE!"

-and the docile dog took flight.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DANGER OF FORGETFULNESS.

THE princess was astonished at Leon's audacity, and at the firm way in which he kept his seat. He rose into the air to a frightful elevation, and no impression of fear was visible upon his features.

Meanwhile the fairy yielded to her reflections.

"Children love danger," she thought; "yes, when it is offered them as a pleasure: make a duty of it, and they will shed tears to escape from it. If I had said, 'Leon, get upon that dog's back, and he will carry you more than a thousand feet into the air,' he would have protested against it; he would have styled me cruel, and accused me of desiring his death."

Leon, from the height to which he had risen,

could no longer make out objects upon earth distinctly; Paris appeared in his eyes but a heap of stones, and the top of the cupola of the Invalides seemed like an English needle with a golden head.

In proportion as he rose the air became fresher; and as he was lightly clad, he began to think it was time to come down again.

He was about to utter the magic word which he had so often said over before taking his flight into the air; but he made a mistake, and confounding the word which set the dog flying with the one which was to bring him back, cried out twice, as he thought he was to do:

" NASGUETTE!"

But the dog, so far from coming down, only made fresh efforts to arise, and flew up, up, up in a still higher flight.

Leon observed his error, and tried to pronounce the second word; but he had almost forgotten it; he said it badly, and the flying dog gave no indication of obedience.

It is true the magic word was somewhat difficult to retain, particularly for a boy who was not the son of a magician.

Instead of "Aldaboro," Leon said: Ay, then, bother! or, A daddy, brother! A pen borrow! A tin burrow!—and a great deal more nonsense of the same kind, which had nothing magical about it: the dog therefore took matters very easily, and flew about and about without at all thinking of coming down.

Leon now began to feel somewhat alarmed.

"Am I to stop all my life up here?" he inquired; "won't mamma be in a fright, if she doesn't see me come home?—and then, I can't live up here in the air without eating and drinking! It's no use crying out for help either; for nobody will hear me. O, dear! O, dear! what will become of me!"

It is very certain he could not trust to the passers-by to obtain any help; travellers are rare in that country, perhaps because there are no inns to get refreshment at.

The poor boy began to lose all his admiration for his splendid dog; he discovered that a marvel is a torment instead of a pleasure when we do not know how to make use of it.

Then he began to shed tears, as all children do when they are frightened; but on reflecting that tears could be of no use whatever just now, since there was nobody likely to be touched by them, he took heart again, and said to himself that, instead of losing his time in bewailing his fate, it would be a great deal better to collect all his thoughts and endeavour to discover the magic word which was to bring him again to earth, and draw him out of danger.

Upon this there arose in that little head an effort of memory worthy of the brain of a sage, of a mathematician.

"I knew that fatal word two hours ago," thought Leon, "when it was no use to me; and now that my very life depends on it, I cannot get

it back into my head. O, but that would be too bad! too unfortunate! Come, come, let us try again:

Allabro! Allabrero! Almarrowbo! Altabro!

Ah, ah, I'm drawing near."

Leon said all this aloud, and went on talking for a good quarter of an hour; so that if, by chance, any one had happened to pass that way, he would have been somewhat surprised to hear this little man jabbering these strange words all by himself in the air.

By dint of searching in his memory, he at last found the magic word.

"ALDABORO!" he cried out, with his heart brimful of joy, and with some feeling of pride; for he was proud at having got himself out of danger by his own unaided efforts. Had a voice whispered to him the word of safety, and thus taken from him the merit of finding it himself, he would probably have given scanty thanks for the assistance.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NAME.

Who shall describe Leon's delight as he saw the fabulous dog obey his command? The creature de-

scended rapidly to earth; and Leon gently stroked his wings, so delighted did he feel with him.

Leon soon began to make out different objects that were at first imperceptible. Paris was no longer a heap of stones, but a great heap of houses; the big trees were no longer tufts of grass; the column of the Place Vendôme ceased to wear the appearance of a thick walking-cane; the towers of Notre Dame to look like two sticks of black sealing-wax; and the Seine a long, yellow, dirty ribbon, which bound all those houses together.

He even began to distinguish the princess's Chinese pavilion, and the princess herself, who, in her white muslin dress, looked like a swan upon the lawn.

By degrees he observed her still more plainly, stretching out her arms, so anxious was she for his arrival; for the good fairy had been not a little uneasy at Leon's prolonged absence.

The dog, having recognised his mistress, ran crouching towards her, and Leon put his feet to the ground with an eagerness it is easy to understand.

"Here I am at last!" he cried; "though I was very near losing you for ever: I had forgotten the magic word; but I shall always remember it in future."

"You are a brave boy," said the princess, as she kissed Leon; "you are worthy to be the owner of a marvel. But it is late; return quickly home; your mother must have been expecting you long since. Go, my child."

"And my dog?" Leon interrupted; "may I not take my dog with me?"

"What! you like him still, in spite of the danger

he has caused you?"

"O, yes, certainly; I fear nothing now. I shall have a good memory in future. Now then, come," added Leon, addressing the flying dog, that he was dragging off with him; but suddenly he stopped.

"I don't know his name; what do you call

him, madame?"

- "His name here is the Flying Dog," the princess replied; "but we must give him another; for, above all things, my dear, you must conceal from every one that your dog has wings. You must only fly with him by night, or in this garden, where nobody can see you."
 - "What! may I not tell mamma?"
 - "Not even mamma, nor any one else."
- "Not even Henry?" added Leon, in a pettish tone.
 - "Who is Henry?" asked the princess.
- "Henry! why he is my schoolfellow; he is fifteen; he is bigger than I: his uncle has made him a present of a gun."

"Well, why do you wish to say any thing to him about your dog?"

"Because he is always boasting about his gun. He is to come to our house to spend the holidays with his uncle and his gun; and he is always joking me, because I am too young to go out shooting. He is quite a big fellow, and wears a stick-up collar and boots."

"That may be; but he has not a flying dog," the fairy replied with a meaning smile; "and if you learn to use your dog properly, you will, thanks to him, bring back more partridges and pheasants than he will be able to kill with all the guns imaginable."

"Indeed!" cried Leon, leaping with joy; "O, won't Henry be in a rage!"

"Take care, Leon," said the princess; "the least imprudence may spoil all. If ever people find out that your dog has wings, you will most assuredly lose him."

"How so, madame?" asked Leon; "will they steal him?"

"That might be only a temporary misfortune, my dear; for probably, by dint of inquiry, you would find him again, or get him back with money. No; it is a greater misfortune still you have to fear,—a misfortune without remedy. Bear ever in your mind the lesson I am now about to give you; you may not perhaps understand it all now; perhaps, even, it is beyond your age: but do not forget it—and some day you will be very happy to have borne it in mind."

And Leon listened with an attentive ear to the good fairy's words.

CHAPTER VIII.

MORAL OF THIS STORY.

"In this century, when every thing is analysed, commented upon, discussed, examined, and dissected, a marvel, my dear child, is not a marvel, it is a monstrosity. Now, every monstrosity belongs of right to the sect of pickers, who go under various names, such as savants, lawyers, antiquaries, and the like.

"Scarcely does the poor marvel get into their hands, when it is at once analysed, commented upon, discussed, examined, and dissected. Now, one of these days you will know that few governments, actions, persons, things, and dogs, can survive dissection. Analysation becomes, therefore, another name for death. So, my dear child, if ever it be discovered that your dog has wings,—as that circumstance alone makes him a monstrosity,—they will at once set about dissecting him.

"They will cut out his wings, to know what makes them act; they will lay open his chest, to learn how he breathes during his flight; they will cut open his head, to find out if his brain be that of a dog or a bird; they will tear out his eyes, to discover how he can bear the light of the sun; in a word, they will analyse him: and the poor beast will be so cut about, that you will not have the miserable satisfaction left of even having him stuffed."

Leon understood nothing of this speech beyond the fact that his dog would have a good deal to go through if it were known that he was a marvel; and therefore took a firm resolution to keep that great secret to himself.

"Now," said the fairy, "what name will you give him?"

Leon was a bit of a pedant; and as he was studying mythology, and two days ago had learnt the name of the poets' horse which had wings, said:

"I will call him Pegasus."

"Silly boy," cried the fairy, "it is the same thing as if you said, 'My dog has wings;' since Pegasus was so adorned."

"Well, then, I'll call him Zephyr."

"Worse!" exclaimed the fairy; "you do not think. You must give him a sort of name which has no connexion whatever with his extraordinary powers."

"Ah! I understand," said Leon; "we must hide it: my dog is light, since he flies; I will therefore call him Lumpy."

"That will not do either," the fairy answered; "the contrary of a thing often gives an idea of it; for there are cunning people in this country. Take my advice: choose for your dog a name which means just nothing at all, such as Azor, Castor, Medor."

"No!" said the boy with disdain; "mamma's porter has three pups, and he has just given them the same names."

"Well, then, call him Faraud, Taquin, Sbogar: any of these will do."

"Faraud! yes, I like Faraud; but-Taquin is

prettier. Yet, to call out to him when he is a good way off, Faraud would be better. Sbogar is very well too, but Taquin is more amusing. Faraud does better for calling,—Faraud, Faraud! but it's too common; and I think that Sbogar—but yet Sbogar!—"

"Ah, my dear child," said the princess, "are you not beginning again your indecision of this morning? 'I'll have a dog; no—a bird: I'll have a bird; no—a dog. I'll take tea; no—coffee: I'll take coffee; no—tea.' Do you not know that nothing is more tiresome in a child than indecision; and that you run the risk of getting neither of the things you want, by not being able to make up your mind as to which you will have?"

Leon felt the force of this truth; he decided at once on adopting the name of Faraud, which he immediately gave to his new friend; and after having taken a tender farewell of the good princess, thanking her warmly for her present, he returned home to his mamma followed by the flying dog.

The poor boy was more heavily laden than he had ever been in his life before; for he carried with him a secret! a treasure! a marvel!

CHAPTER IX.

DISSIMULATION.

On Leon's arrival home, his heart was joyful and mind already anxious. It is one of the penalties of

possessing a marvel, to suffer anxiety on account of it: a beautiful object is always in danger.

Madame de Cherville kissed her son tenderly on his return.

"At last," she said, "you have come back; I began to be uncomfortable about your long absence. Now, tell me, have you been much amused? what have you been doing at the princess's?"

Leon was at a loss to answer this question, because he could not do so openly and frankly.

"I breakfasted," he replied.

"Well, and after that?—you have not been breakfasting all day?"

"I have had tea and coffee."

"From nine o'clock in the morning till five in the afternoon! you must have had two or three dozen cups then, at least," said Madame de Cherville with a smile.

"O, I have not been so long at breakfast as all that," Leon replied; "we walked about the conservatories and in the garden—and I have been running about—and playing—"

"What nasty dog is that?" interrupted Madame de Cherville; "it surely is not the one you have chosen? Dear me, how ugly he is! my poor Leon,

the princess has been making fun of you."

As Leon could not mention all the talents his dog possessed, he would have greatly preferred not talking about him at all; but when he heard his mother speak of the extraordinary animal so insultingly, he could not bear it.

"O, mamma, if you could only see how he-

runs!" he exclaimed, "you would no longer think him ugly. If you could only see him as I saw him!—And then he is so clever, so intelligent; he is a most remarkable, a most extraordinary dog: in fact, I do not believe there is another in the whole world like him!"

"O, don't be alarmed, my dear; you may rest assured I shall not go to hunt after his equal; the sight of him alone is quite enough for me."

And Madame de Cherville, in spite of herself, could not help laughing at the miserable figure the animal cut; and, in truth, as we have observed, the dog had very little pretension to beauty.

Leon was on thorns; he could not, without great annoyance, hear Madame de Cherville laugh at his dog,—that wonderful dog, whose merit he himself knew so well. He could not bear to see a creature so worthy of admiration thus despised. His self-love suffered for his poor dog, of which he had now become so fond; with which he had risen so high above the earth; with which he had soared among the clouds far above the world and the dwellings of men:—have him thus insulted! O, it was impossible!

"Come, my good Faraud," said Leon, addressing the flying dog, "come into my room: there at least nobody shall laugh at you."

"In your own room!" cried Madame de Cherville; "no, indeed, my love; you must take him into the stable."

"The stable!" repeated Leon in an angry tone; "put into the stable a dog which—" At these

words he stopped short, for he felt his secret was about to escape him; but his indignation and grief were too much for him, so he burst into tears.

Madame de Cherville felt pity for her son's despair.

"Come, come, my dear," she said, "don't cry; take your dog into your own room if you like, and then come and have your dinner; I have been waiting for you some time."

Leon, consoled by these words, led Faraud into his room, put down a cushion out of one of the armchairs for him to lie on, and in an easier frame of mind went into the dining-room to his mamma.

CHAPTER X.

WHAT HE LIKES.

LEON ate his dinner with good appetite, for his aerial trip had made him somewhat hungry; but the whole of dinner-time he was tormented but with one idea.

"I forgot to ask the princess what I ought to feed my dog on. Must I treat him as a bird or a dog? give him birdseed or a bone to pick? If I had him here, I should soon see whether he would eat bread; I would try."

Whilst in the midst of these reflections, a great uproar was heard in the house; every servant seemed to be up in arms.

"Rascal! thief!" they cried out, "will you be

off? nasty creature!" and all sorts of hard words besides.

Madame de Cherville rang the bell to learn the cause of all this confusion.

- "Madame," said the footman, "cook is in a dreadful rage; Mr. Leon's dog has just stolen two cutlets."
- "O, I'm so glad!" cried Leon; "I know now what he likes; and I—"
- "Why, I could have told you that, you silly boy," cried Madame de Cherville, laughing; "and if you had asked me, we might have saved the cutlets into the bargain."

Leon, observing that they were running after his dog about the courtyard, hastened to the rescue; and having caught him, shut him up in his room, and locked the door, so as to prevent his getting out a second time.

Thus enlightened about what the flying dog would eat, Leon from that time no longer thought of treating him like a canary. He took great care of him, and liked him better every day.

He waited with impatience for the coming of autumn; he was desirous of seeing the days draw in, so as not to be seen when taking his flight into the clouds. The fairy had particularly recommended him not to fly during the daytime, unless at her own palace; and even there only from the lawn round the pavilion. In that vast and solitary garden, and where besides he was protected by the fairy's power, he was sheltered from all eyes; but any other spot would have been dangerous.

Leon, therefore, went almost daily to the princess's, followed by the flying dog, which was the subject of the most disagreeable remarks from people on the road.

"What an ugly wretch!" some would say; "did you ever see an uglier creature in your life?"

"Well, there's no accounting for tastes!" another would observe; "when there's such a quantity of pretty dogs, to have a thing like that!"

"Why, my child's mongrel is prettier than he is!"

"It's a kind of poodle," said a countryman with contempt.

"You're a poodle!" answered his wife; "Tom's is a poodle; but it's a very different thing to that ugly beast."

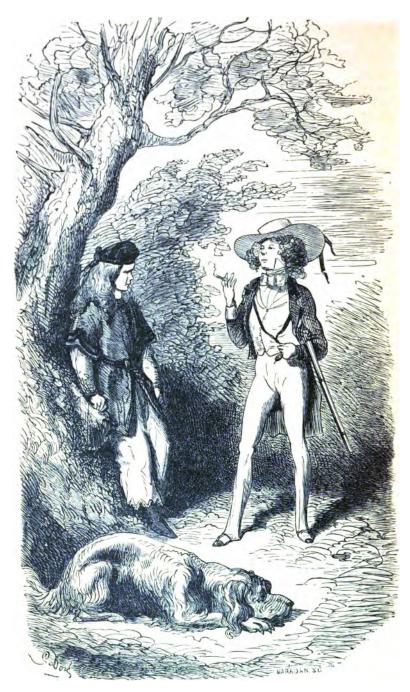
Leon consoled himself for these humiliating remarks on his arrival at the fairy's: scarce had he mounted his dog, and risen with him into the air, when he forgot all these petty insults; he was too high to hear them any longer.

By degrees he accustomed himself to see his treasure unknown and overlooked; and his dog, whose merit he alone was acquainted with, only became dearer to him from that circumstance.

CHAPTER XI.

A FRIEND.

But Leon's friend Henry, the young gentleman who boasted a stick-up collar and boots, was ex-



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 $^{\prime\prime}$ You'll lend me that ugly dog when I go shooting, won't you ?"

pected at the villa: his gun, indeed, had already arrived; it had been brought with his uncle's luggage; for they were both to remain at Madame de Cherville's till very near the end of the vacation.

Leon was astonished at himself, at not feeling any satisfaction when he learnt the news of his young friend's speedy arrival.

"Henry is such an eternal quiz!" he thought; "what will he say to my poor dog?"

When any thing makes us happy, and we are fearful about our friends' opinion of it, it is a sign that these pretended friends do not love us so much as we are willing to believe; for otherwise they would be anxious to show indulgence for what we are ourselves attached to. Leon had a striking proof of this truth.

Madame de Cherville felt a great dislike for dogs,—and more than this, she thought her son's unusually ugly; but no sooner had she remarked Leon's attachment to Faraud than she treated the poor beast with kindness; and when Leon was by, even went so far as to pat him, in order to please her son; when out, she would sometimes buy him some biscuits; for a good mother will do much for her child.

But this was very far from being the case with Henry. Scarce had he made his appearance when he began talking about his gun; then, observing the dog, he said:

"You'll lend me that ugly dog when I go shooting, won't you?"

"No, indeed," Leon replied; "you don't know

how to shoot yet; you would be putting some shot into him by mistake. I can't let you have him."

"Arn't you afraid they'll take your lout of a dog for a hare?" asked Henry, maliciously; and from morning till night he did not cease teasing the flying dog, which would not even deign to snap at him.

Leon soon discovered that Henry was not sincerely his friend; since he found so much pleasure in tormenting the poor animal for no other reason than that of annoying him.

The goodtempered Faraud and Leon submitted to Henry's persecutions with the greater patience, as they had a thousand ways of avenging themselves. Every morning at daybreak the tall youth set out upon a sporting expedition; and every evening came back with a long face and discontented mind, for he had not killed a single bird.

Leon, on the contrary, returned always laden with partridges and pheasants. He had discovered in the neighbouring forest a solitary spot, which was inaccessible on every side on account of a quagmire and thick bushes. A great many birds took refuge there. Leon, hidden from every eye by the tall forest-trees, cleared precipices and bushes on the wings of the flying dog. Scarce did a bird rise before them when Faraud was after it like lightning, and soon came up with it; for he flew swifter than any bird could do: he would seize it with his mouth, and then turn round his head to Leon, to offer him his game.

This new kind of sport amused Leon more than

any other pleasure; it was much more agreeable to him than to go out for a row with Henry, who sprinkled him with water the whole time, and whose great delight was to tip Faraud into the river.

Henry, as might be supposed, was very jealous of Leon's success with regard to the birds; and Leon, who did not put great trust in his friend, never spoke a word about the pheasants he had killed till they were in the cook's hands, and being got ready for table. He was right; for if Henry had examined them when his young friend brought them in, he would have remarked that they bore about them no traces of a gunshot, and might have entertained suspicions dangerous to the flying dog.

Leon's amiableness was not less worthy of imitation than his dexterity, and Henry had every day to listen to fresh praises which were bestowed on his friend. It was impossible to see Leon without liking him, and without positive hatred if once jealous of him. Since he had been the possessor of an important secret, his whole character was changed; the continual presence of mind required to hide a mystery had matured his reason more than ten ordinary years would have done. Leon had become reflective before his age; but this did not prevent his being amiable and kind. It seemed, on the contrary, that, filled with a thought which he could confide to no one, he never dreamed of annoying others; which is always done by people who have nothing to think about, and who therefore busy

themselves about other people for no better purpose than to tease them.

Every one in the country round about was fond of him: his attention to his mother, above all, was a frequent subject of praise.

"He is so attached to her," they said, "that one night he went fifteen leagues on foot, to go and fetch a doctor at Paris. The poor lady was very ill, it is true, and she had no faith in the medical man here; but she was so pleased with her dear boy, that it helped to cure her quite as much as the doctor himself."

This is what the good women of the country thought; we, who know the flying dog, are aware that Leon did not perform this journey on foot. He had succeeded so well, by force of habit, in directing Faraud wherever he wished him to fly, that he managed to make him go just wherever he pleased, and night was no obstacle. Leon, seeing his mother so ill, had set off in the evening to fetch the doctor at Paris; and next day the doctor arrived, and related to every body that Leon, after having explained to him Madame de Cherville's illness, had set out on his return on foot with his dog, refusing to wait for daylight, when he would have brought him back in his carriage.

So it happened that the people in the country thought that this kind son had, in a single night, walked fifteen leagues,—seven-and-a-half there and seven-and-a-half back.

They related too, that on another occasion he had sent a messenger to Perpignan;—just imagine,

Perpignan, in the south of France!—to give his mamma news of one of his sisters about whom she felt anxious. "The messenger," the good folks added, "brought back the letter two days after. That must have cost Mr. Leon a good sum of money; for it is very dear to hire horses for such long journeys."

One day, Madame de Cherville came into her son's room:

"Kiss me, Leon," she said; "you are going to be very happy; you will at last see your papa again: he has written to me from the lazaret of Toulon, where he is in quarantine: in a fortnight or so he will be here."

Leon was indeed most sincerely rejoiced; Mr. de Cherville had been three years absent, and it is easy to understand how happy his son was at the idea of seeing him again. But what is more difficult to imagine, is Leon's impatience in learning that his father was detained at the lazaret.

He had supported bravely his absence, as long as Mr. de Cherville had been engaged at Constantinople, because the very greatness of the distance deprived him of all hope of getting to him,—and it is this hope which causes trouble; but he could not be easy at the idea of knowing that he was so near him, that he had positively reached France, and yet would be kept fifteen mortal days a prisoner in the most disagreeable of all disagreeable places.

Here was a fine opportunity for a trip with his flying dog.

Leon hastened to the princess, to confide his projects to her.

"My father is arrived at Toulon," he said; "I must positively go and see him; but as I shall require some time for my journey, please tell mamma that you wish me to spend a few days with you here. I only want to see my father; I shall find courage not to say a word to him, not even to kiss him: I will not betray my secret; but I must see him. O, I am so impatient to see him again!"

The princess, touched by his pressing manner, wrote a few lines to Madame de Cherville, to beg her to allow Leon to spend a few days with her, to keep one of her nephews company who had just come there on a visit; and Madame de Cherville yielded to her request.

Leon profited by the time thus gained, and set out that same evening for Toulon, mounted on his flying dog.

The road appeared to him a very long one. The following morning he stopped at Lyons for some breakfast, and to give his poor dog a rest. He spent the whole day there, and walked about the town followed by his faithful companion, who trotted in the streets upon his four paws just like any common dog. Faraud resembled a great actor off the stage, who may look very earthy, very common, very gross, and sometimes childish in his habits; but who, upon the boards, appears beaming with splendour, with majesty; his arm upraised, his foot advanced, his head thrown back, his look

proud and noble, bearing his helmet with a haughty air, his mantle with grace, and in nothing recalling to the mind that same dirty individual who was pattering along the streets, bespattered with mud, and an umbrella over his head from which the water poured in streams.

Like him, Faraud in the daytime went splashing through the gutters; but at night he rose majestically into the air;—only, unhappily, there was no public to admire and applaud.

Leon the third day reached Toulon,—or rather the third night; for he descended to earth before daybreak, for fear of being discovered.

However great his impatience might have been to embrace his dear father once more, Leon nevertheless showed that he could be prudent: he made his very heart subservient to his predominating thought,—his secret. Trials like these do indeed help to form the character of a child.

And, in fact, no little resolution and constancy were requisite to remain thus near his father without showing himself to him; to resign himself to the merely catching a glimpse of him at his window, or hearing his voice utter some accidental phrase. It mattered not; Leon was happy. As soon as night fell, he flew with Faraud towards the lazaret, and glided past his father's window. As the casement was almost constantly open, he could see every thing that was passing in the room; so closely, indeed, that on one occasion, when his father was talking of him to one of his travelling-companions, Leon felt abashed at the part of a spy he

seemed to be playing, and for a moment repented his indiscretion.

"Eight days hence we shall be out of the lazaret, and I shall see my son again," said Mr. de Cherville. "He must have grown very much, and be considerably changed. His mother writes me that he has become positively beautiful, and moreover gives promise of a good deal of judgment and sound sense. My notion was to make a sailor of him, like myself; but if he has no inclination for such a calling, I shall allow him full liberty to make his own choice: in any case, I shall seem to insist on his entering the navy; and if his thoughts are turned elsewhere, an obstacle is sure to bring them out; for nothing gives greater force to one's wishes than opposing them."

Leon nevertheless smiled inwardly at what he had just heard; and in spite of the delicacy of his scruples, promised himself that he would take advantage of this indirect announcement.

"Ah, ah! you intend to oppose me, my good papa, do you?" he thought: "well, we shall see whether you will succeed."

Leon, notwithstanding the pleasure which he thus felt in seeing and hearing his father through the narrow casement, was obliged to return to Paris, or rather, to the environs of Paris, to the fairy-princess's seat, where it was to be supposed he had passed the whole time of his journey.

He had been but six days absent, and his mother was as delighted to see him again as if he had been away for years. Henry did not express the

same joy; he received his friend with a malicious smile, and Leon felt uncomfortable when he said to him with some tartness:

"I say, where are you come from?"

"From the Princess de Valencourt's," replied Leon, blushing.

"Yes, now, very probably; but you have not been there the whole time you have been away. I took a stroll in her park the day before yesterday; I made inquiries of the gamekeeper, and he told me you were not at the palace."

"He doesn't live there," said Leon, angrily;

" how should he know any thing about it?"

"Why, he had just left the princess's when I met him; and you were not there, nor that pretended nephew of hers either, whom she had invited you to come and spend a day or two with;—just as if you hadn't a friend here at your own house, who is as good as the nephew of any princess in the world."

"The gamekeeper is a stupid!" cried Leon, abruptly walking off; for if he had learnt how to feign with address, he could not tell a falsehood so cleverly.

Leon went up into his own room with an anxious heart, not a little put out by the suspicions of his false friend. He knew that when once Henry's mistrust was awakened, he had every thing to apprehend from his curiosity. Like all idle people, Henry was only inclined to give himself trouble to discover what others concealed from him, to find out just what he was not to know.

Leon waited impatiently for the end of the vacation, as he would then see the termination of the visit of one who began to interfere so much with his happiness: he felt that the flying dog would only be safe when Henry himself was gone; and was out of humour with his uncle because he would not hurry his departure. But this uncle was a conscientious man, who did not do a thing because it pleased him, but because he said he would do it. Madame de Cherville had written to him, "Come and pass a month with us in the country;" and he replied, "I will pass a month with you in the country:" and he had come to pass a month with her in the country. He had left Paris on the 1st of September, and he intended returning on the 1st of October, not a day more or a day less. Leon was well aware of all this, and therefore longed for the 1st of October to make its appearance.

Time passed on, and Mr. de Cherville was expected hourly. In the evening Leon resolved to go and have a peep at him on the road; he retired into a dark grove in order to avoid the rays of the moon, which might betray his flying dog, and after having uttered the magic word, he soared upwards. But as he rose, he thought he heard a voice which repeated the word, "Nasguette! Nasguette!" He concluded it must have been an echo, but yet was uncomfortable at the circumstance.

Leon soon, however, got over the feeling when he perceived a carriage with post-horses on the high road; he guessed that it might be his father, and guided his dog in the direction, to reconnoitre, by the light of the moon, whether the traveller was Mr. de Cherville. He was happy to discover that it was; and on this certainty he amused himself with acting the part of his courier. Leon flew upon the wings of his dog to the next stage; where, alighting, he made a great noise at the post-hotel, ordered out the horses, hurried the postillions, and was again in the air before the carriage had driven up. He travelled thus for half the night, just before his father, until they reached the villa-gates. Before the carriage had driven in, Leon had alighted with the flying dog, and was the first to rush out to meet his father. As he pressed him in his arms, Leon exclaimed:

"I had a presentiment that you would arrive to-night, and therefore did not go to bed; I should not have slept if I had."

"To tell you the truth," said Mr. de Cherville, "I did not expect myself to be here before to-morrow; but really the postal service is so capitally managed, that I have not lost an hour on the road—particularly the last part of my journey. Ah! administration has made great progress in France since my absence; from this time forth I must give the postmasters a good character, for they do their business conscientiously."

"This time," Leon thought, "I myself am the administration."

So it is, that we often mistake for a general amelioration what is really nothing but the secret zeal of a friend, who does us a service without our knowing it. Leon was indeed happy to see his father again, to speak to him, to kiss him now; and yet all this happiness became embittered, not by a great misfortune, but by a mere trifle,—a word said in laughter; a sound which was without meaning for every body else, but which awoke in his mind a sense of imminent danger.

Whilst walking round the garden with his father, Leon heard the same voice which had troubled him the evening before distinctly pronounce the fatal word:

" Nasguette! Nasguette!"

Alas! it was not possible to come to the same conclusion now, that it was the echo which had given it utterance.

Leon turned pale, and his father was struck at the expression of sadness upon his features. The poor boy, by a motion of involuntary fear, not seeing Faraud at his side, ran to seek him in his chamber. He found Faraud lying upon his usual cushion, as he was constantly accustomed to do; but his anxiety, though relieved for the moment, was not less painful to his mind.

All dinner-time Henry's sneering and disagreeable manner annoyed him much; he was constantly directing some little witticism at Leon, which filled him with apprehension. If Mr. de Cherville spoke of his travels, Henry would say with a knowing look:

"Our friend Leon, too, is very fond of travelling; but he does not, like you, care so much for sea-voyages; he rather prefers the—" here he would stop, and looking at Leon with a searching eye, would add—" the land; don't you, Leon?"

And Leon found the malice of his smile very hard to bear.

He clearly saw that Henry was on the point of guessing his secret, if he had not even already managed to find it out.

Leon passed that night in apprehension; he could not cease patting and stroking his dear Faraud. As if touched by some presentiment, he would often, in the course of that night, jump up in bed, and cast his eyes towards his sleeping friend with a look which seemed as though bestowed on one about to depart for ever, on a dear object on the point of being torn from him, and on which he was gazing for the last time. Alas, has not a tender heart reason to feel alarm when its enemy has cast his eyes on what it loves!

CHAPTER XII.

I TOLD YOU SO.

However, Henry's uncle began to talk about their speedy departure; it was the 28th of September, and that punctual gentleman was to return to Paris on the 1st of October. The city-gates might have been shut; the streets of Paris once more, that is for the third time, barricaded; he might have been threatened with musket-shots, with cannon-balls,—

still nothing would have prevented his making his entry. He had said, "I shall arrive on the 1st of October."

Leon was very far from finding fault with his preciseness; on the contrary, he appreciated it more than any body else; only he regretted that this punctual individual should not have taken it into his head to start three days sooner.

"If they were once gone," said Leon to himself, "I should be easy in my mind, for Faraud would be safe; since Henry is not going back to school, I shall have no further occasion to see him, and most certainly I shan't regret it. He is not my friend; I distrust him too much: he doesn't care a bit for me; friendship means confidence. O, how I wish he was gone!"

The next morning, being the 29th, Henry already began packing up; and Leon helped him to clean his gun with a good deal of zeal, I can assure you: never did he feel greater pleasure in doing him a service. Just at this time Mr. de Cherville came to look for Leon, to take him for a walk with him. Leon, on leaving the house with his father, thought at first of going to fetch Faraud; but on reflecting that he was perhaps safer shut up in his own room, he walked away.

No sooner had they gone than Henry ran to Leon's room. The door was carefully closed; but the window, which was open, was so low, that it was easy to get into the apartment even without the help of a ladder. Henry soon found Faraud upon his cushion.

"Ah, ah!" he said, "come here, my fine Pegasus; we two will have a journey together now."

And thus speaking, he caught hold of Faraud, and pitched him out of the window.

"You have got wings," he added, "so it doesn't much matter if you break your paws."

He leaped into the garden, and seizing the dog by the ears, exclaimed:

"Come, come, I want to have some sport in my turn, my fine fellow; won't you do something for me?"

Henry then bestrode the dog's back; and imitating Leon, whom he had so closely spied a few days before, he repeated in a sonorous voice the magic word; and poor Faraud, condemned to obey as he heard it, rose in the air as with his friend. But he did his duty clumsily, and moreover Henry was a great deal bigger and much heavier than Leon. The dog's flight was unequal and jerky; and Henry, almost immediately losing his equilibrium, staggered. He tried to save himself by catching hold of Faraud's wings; but the dog, accustomed only to the tender caresses of his master, shook them violently, and the would-be traveller fell.

Faraud having only risen a short distance from the ground, Henry's fall was not a serious one. But the young man, unfortunately, did not know the magic word which had power to stop the dog's flight, so that Faraud rose, and rose, and rose, and never came down again.

Had Leon arrived at that moment, he might

still have been in time to call out "Aldaboro" loud enough for his dog to hear. Alas, Leon was not near.

The flying dog, not feeling himself guided, went wandering about the air; he darted into heavy clouds, at the risk of getting wetted through and through; he soared at hazard here and there, without rule or plan; he veered from right to left, as undecided as a paper kite. At last he went westward, in the direction of Paris.

Leon returned in high spirits with his father, little dreaming of the unhappy news which awaited him. He found Henry lying on the grass, alternately rubbing his leg and arms, and wearing the appearance of a person who has had a recent fall.

"What is the matter?" asked Leon. "What has thrown you down?"

"That wretch of a dog," replied Henry, angrily; "he would not let me sit on his back; but I'll pay him out for it,—a nasty beast!"

"What!" cried Leon in alarm; "what do you mean? Faraud!—but I had shut him up in my room; he must be there still—"

"Is he? In your room, eh? Well, if you look up there, you'll see him."

Leon, almost stunned, raised his eyes to the place indicated.

"Do you see up there, just by that cloud, a little black spot?" continued Henry; "you would say it was a swallow; but it isn't; it's your dog, your ugly Faraud. Ah, ah! you have secrets, have you? you keep a flying dog, and don't say

a word about it to your friends! that's very kind of you! O, dear, I am afraid half my bones are broken!"

Poor Leon was so intent in following Faraud in his path through the skies, that he did not even think of assisting Henry to get up. Leon was completely dejected, as one is apt to be at sight of a danger for which no remedy can be applied. As long as he could distinguish the little black spot in the heavens, he conceived some hope; but when that spot became invisible Leon lost all spirits, and drooped his head, as if resigned to a stroke of fate. His misfortune did not cause him the despair which a sudden mishap usually occasions; it brought with it a deep and silent grief, which a sorrow that has been long foreseen is apt to create in us.

He did not reproach Henry for the perfidy of his conduct: he helped him to return to the house; took all care of him, and sent for a surgeon to cure him of the bruises which he had received in his fall; then, resolved to hide his grief from his mother, he went to pass the rest of the day with the fairy his protectress, and learn from her if there were no means of getting back the flying dog.

"Alas, my dear Leon," said the princess, "I can promise you nothing. The flying dog will only return to earth when, overcome by fatigue, his wings will no longer support his weight. But who can tell upon what spot of earth he may alight? It may be perhaps in China, Peru, Egypt, Golconda; provided it is not in Paris—"

"Paris!" repeated Leon; "O, I should like

that best: there might then be some chance of my getting him back again."

"Child," said the princess, "have you, then, forgotten the lesson which I gave you? Should your poor dog be discovered at Paris with his wings spread, he is lost for ever. Paris is the tomb of marvels: and, indeed, how could a marvel live among people who do not like to be astonished; among people who are constantly seeking the why and the wherefore of every thing, who are accustomed to call all things delusions which are not the result of calculation, to whom admiration is a fatigue, and who indemnify themselves for the momentary admiration forced from them at sight of a marvel by quickly explaining it by a vulgarity? No, Leon, if the flying dog should fall at Paris, forget that you have ever been his owner; for depend upon it you will never see him again. Who knows? he may even now be a prey to science; ere this his existence may have been explained; the Academy of Sciences has already perhaps come to a conclusion about the anatomical peculiarities of that curious animal. Ah, my dear child, it would be better for the being whose soul is susceptible of enthusiasm and greatness to fall upon an unknown island, among savages, than fall alive among the professors of science at Paris!"

These words were not of a kind to inspire Leon with confidence concerning the fate of the flying dog. He returned to his mother in even sadder mood than before his visit to the fairy.

He spent several weeks in a state of extreme

despondency; and his mother, seeing him so much out of spirits, could not understand how a child should feel such deep and lasting sorrow at the loss of a mere dog.

She did not know the value this mere dog was in her Leon's eyes: thus it is that we are often blamed for our regrets, because people do not know the extent of our loss.

Henry had left the villa a little too late, alas, for Leon's happiness; and Leon, having no longer the resource of his aerial trips, passed his evenings sadly with his parents.

The newspapers were brought in every evening at nine o'clock; Mr. de Cherville first looked over the political news, and then passed the newspaper to Leon, who was accustomed to read aloud the reports of scientific meetings and the literary portions of the journal.

One evening Leon took up the paper, and was reading it as usual, when suddenly he stopped; words broke unintelligibly from his lips, a cold shiver ran through his frame, tears started to his eyes, the paper escaped from his hand, and Leon fainted away.

The reason was, that the sheet contained an article entitled Academy of Sciences, and a report of Mr. G. de Saint * * * concerning an animal of singular formation, which combined the properties both of a dog and a bird: it resembled a dog in its paws, its tail, and its jaw; and a bird in its skull, its brain, its chest, and its wings;—the wings, above all, must not be forgotten;—an animal, in fact, of a

species hitherto unknown, and on which he proposed to bestow the name of the "Flying Dog."

The idea, indeed, was not a bad one, and the Academy had adopted it.

"But, faint away at the death of a dog!" some of you will say: "it is too much."

No, my dear children, it is not too much.

The wings of the flying dog were to Leon what day-dreams, illusions, are to the poet; and, for my-self, I think I should not faint, but die, if my day-dreams, my illusions, were torn away from me.



THE PALACE OF VANITY.

This palace was a magnificent pile, which rose by the side of a high-road, along which many travellers were accustomed each day to pass.

The building was of square form, and was equally beautiful at all four sides; a portico, supported by graceful pillars, surrounded it completely. It is true that this colonnade prevented the light of day from shining brilliantly within; but it rendered it so beautiful outside, that no one dared to consider this a defect; and besides, what need is there for daylight in a palace? Are there not chandeliers and candelabra? why trouble oneself about the sun?

This palace had a dome completely covered with gilding; not like most other domes, which have just a little gold upon the top,—the whole cupola of this was adorned with it, and it dazzled the eyes.

The queen who inhabited this splendid house was a tall and beautiful woman, who, in the place where her heart should be, had a large diamond, cut in the shape of a heart. It was believed that this was the reason why she had never loved.

Upon the pediment of her palace were inscribed these words, in letters composed of rubies:

Cherp one map here obtain his wish.

A young man, who was passing along the road, stopped to observe this splendid mansion; having perceived the inscription,—for it would have been hard not to notice it,—he suddenly cried out:

"By my faith, but I'll go in here; I am tired of my position, and should not be sorry to be something else."

As he drew near the portico, he perceived an old mendicant, seated on a stone, and who was laughing as if much amused.

"You are laughing at me, my good fellow," said the young traveller; "well, I return you the compliment; for a man must be as stupid as yourself to remain in rags at the door of a palace where you would only have to wish for some clothes to be decked out like a prince. Perhaps you can't read?"

"O yes, I can," the old man answered; "I can read even words written in rubies."

"If so, do you wish for nothing, that you do not at once step inside?"

"Yes, I wish for a good many things; but not for those that they would give me in there."

The old man looked so cunning, as he said these words, that the traveller began to distrust him.

"He wants to draw me into some snare," he thought; and he turned upon his heel, with the intention of continuing his way.

"Don't be afraid," the mendicant then said, "no harm will come to you through merely going into the palace. Mischief only happens to those who ask for any thing: you may take my word, and go in."

"Perhaps so; but can I get out again afterwards?"

"Certainly," the mendicant replied, "if you find nothing there to wish for."

The young man hesitated: he saw a great many people pass along the road, and yet not one who seemed to think of entering the palace. This appeared suspicious, and he grew alarmed.

"Is this palace haunted, that travellers pass it

by and do not venture in?"

"Most likely," replied the mendicant, "they have heard it spoken of; they know that those inside find it very slow, and in this country people like bustle and amusement."

As the traveller expressed some curiosity to see the inside, the mendicant said to him:

"Listen to me; if you will give me enough to buy a bottle of decent wine, I will make a sacrifice, and will go in with you. We shall have a good laugh together at the stupid creatures who live there."

"Most willingly," the young man exclaimed.

He then gave the mendicant a piece of money, and both walked towards the door.

This was of pure crystal, and allowed them to see inside the bell which they had to ring to get the door opened. As the traveller peeped through, he observed that this bell was made of gold, and that, instead of a clapper, it had a fine pearl in the form of a pear; both so beautiful, that he was quite bewildered at the sight.

He was still looking in, but without making any

move, when the old man, growing impatient, called out:

"Why don't you ring?"

"To say the truth, I don't dare," the young man replied; "I am afraid of cracking that pearl if I ring; and that would be a pity, for it is really wonderful."

"O, nonsense!" cried the mendicant, who was but a poor judge of precious stones, "let me ring; I'll soon dare, I can tell you."

"No, no; let us knock at the door instead."

But again he stopped; for he thought, as that beautiful door was made of crystal, that the beating of the knocker would break it.

So he altered his mind again, and gave a pull at the bell-rope; but he rang so gently, that you could scarcely hear the faintest tinkle.

The mendicant, annoyed at these dainty proceedings, seized the knocker, and gave such a tremendous blow with it, that the door broke, and flew into shivers.

There being now no obstacle to their entry, they walked in.

There was nobody in the entrance-hall; in the Palace of Vanity no one chooses to stop in the entry.

And yet such an entry was more beautiful than a good many drawing-rooms: it was adorned with statues representing gods and goddesses; pictures representing kings and queens, princes and princesses.

The pavement was of jasper and porphyry: but this splendid pavement was so smooth, so slippery, that the young man, whose shoes had stout nails in them, was very near falling three times in the space of as many minutes.

He was obliged to creep along by the wall; it was about as bad as walking upon ice;—at least, in that case, he might have put on a pair of skates.

The old man slipped a little too; but his beg-

gar's staff helped to keep him up.

After a good deal of trouble, they managed at last to reach a vast saloon, where several persons were met together. Their garments were magnificent: the women were covered with precious stones; they even had some on their rich court-trains, which were spread out at length upon the carpet; their bracelets, their necklaces, their tiaras were quite dazzling. The young traveller, whom we shall henceforth call Almeric, was charmed at the sight.

The men in this saloon did not yield one iota to the women in the matter of dress: they wore velvet coats embroidered with diamonds, and on their heads a fancy cap, ornamented with four feathers that were worthy to adorn a queen's bonnet.

"Who are these great folks?" inquired Almeric of the mendicant.

"They are the servants of the house," he replied.

It was even so.; for directly the great folks saw the two travellers come in, they approached them to receive their orders, and inquire whether they wished to visit the palace.

"Upon my word," said Almeric to himself, they are fine birds indeed!" The fear, however, of being troublesome, made him say:

"Perhaps we shall disturb the occupants of the palace by going over it at this hour; perhaps—"

"Disturb the occupants of the Palace of Vanity!" interrupted the mendicant with a sneer; "ah, young man, I defy you to do that! they are here for no other purpose than to be looked at; and you are not likely to put them out by coming to admire them: it is the same thing as if you were afraid of disturbing the actors by going to see and hear them during a performance."

The young stranger could not forbear laughing at this reflection.

"Show us the curiosities of this palace," said the old man; "here is a traveller who would like to live in it; but, before expressing his wish, he must know something more about you: pass on, and let us see."

The traveller was very much surprised at the free and easy manners adopted by the mendicant towards these splendid valets, and at their readiness to obey him: he did not know that the vanity of philosophy takes the lead of all others. There were so many things to surprise him, that he no longer dared to ask questions.

A fat woman, of mature age, who did duty as housekeeper, now came forward to give the keys to the valet who was to accompany the two guests. Almeric then observed behind her two little pages,

who held up her train, and whom the great rotundity of her body had prevented him at first from perceiving.

These two pages stuck to her like her shadow; it was a prerogative of her rank never to take a single step, or do the simplest thing, without the attendance of these two manikins.

The eagerness with which she hastened to comply with the mendicant's order, made her forget her two little body-guards; and she stepped out so quickly, without giving them warning, that they were not in time to follow her; so, scarcely aware of it, they pulled her back by her train: she, on her side, went walking on, so that both the little fellows plumped on to their noses, while the matron herself fell flat upon her back. As she was very heavy, she hurt herself a good deal; and the other servants rushed forward to her assistance.

"A court-train," observed the mendicant, "does not seem the most convenient of dresses for house-hold affairs."

And the young stranger could not forbear laughing at this reflection.

One of the lackeys, having procured a flambeau, conducted the strangers through the spacious apartments of the palace. They reached the dining-hall.

"Will you please to sup, gentlemen?" he inquired.



"Very willingly," said the mendicant; "a good meal alone is not a vanity."

They sat down to table; but scarce had they tasted the first few dishes, when they found them so far-fetched, so salted, so peppered, so sugared, so highly flavoured, and, above all, so complicated, that they would have nothing more to say to them. It was impossible to make out a single thing, so much was it disguised in the seasoning.

"What's this?" asked the old man. "Is it rabbit?"

"No, sir; lamb cutlets."

"And this, I suppose, is stewed peas?"

"No, sir; stewed hare."

There was no chance of guessing right, so great was the confusion. And besides that, it was all half-cold; for the things were served up in malachite dishes, and no one would have dared to warm them.

"By my faith," said the mendicant, "I should prefer an omelet in a pewter platter;" and he put his gilded plate into the servant's hands. As the splendid valet leaned forward to take it, he did not pay attention to the wax-lights which lit up the table, and for the moment forgot the plume which stood high above his head; the costly ornament went too near the flame, and a strong smell of burnt feathers gave notice that the plume had caught fire.

"White feathers," observed the mendicant again, "do not seem particularly convenient for serving at table."

And the young stranger could not again forbear laughing at this reflection.

"Is not the queen of this place, Princess Vanita, at home?" the mendicant inquired of the lackey.

"No, sir; she is just now among her favourite worshippers, in a country whose name I have forgotten, but which is very celebrated for its wines."

"Ah, I guess she is in France," said the

"Ah, I guess she is in France," said the mendicant; "well, she won't come back from there in a hurry. I would not advise you to expect her; for she has plenty of work in that country: quite a new court to form, a new class to seduce. Among those good French folks she reigns over whole districts at once; every condition of life does her homage there in turn: among that nation she triumphs over every thing, alas, even over glory. For fifteen years she held warriors in her chains; for fifteen years she extended her influence over the nobility: at this present time she is trying her hand at the good tradespeople. Military vanity, vanity of birth, and vanity of wealth—each in its turn. Ours perhaps will come next; and, one of these days, we shall have the vanity of misery!"

The mendicant had such a terrific expression on his face when he said these words, that the young stranger had no inclination at all to laugh at this reflection. Perched upon a gilded stick, a beautiful paroquet was uneasily listening at some little distance from the table.

"Fly, fly quickly from this spot, "he said; "remain not a moment in this palace."

Almeric drew near him.

"Why should we?" he inquired; "are you not

happy here?"

"Alas, look at me," the paroquet replied; "I wished to be beautiful; I desired golden claws and ruby wings; and now I am condemned to stop here all my life, thus motionless, as you can see; for it is impossible to fly with ruby wings, or walk with golden claws."

Near the window they perceived a large cat. She did not stir from her place, and seemed morose and discontented.

"What is the matter with you, old mother?" Almeric inquired.

"Excuse me," replied the cat, "but to whom have I the honour of speaking? is it a horse, a serpent, an ass, a man, or a woman? I can see nothing; pray excuse me."

"Are you blind, then?" asked Almeric, with

an expression of interest.

"Alas! yes, sir; and through my own fault. I had always heard a great deal of talk about emerald eyes; I wished to have a pair; and from that time I have lost my sight; I cannot even tell whether they are as pretty as people say. Would you be so good as to give me your opinion on the subject? Just look at me, and say if you think

these real emerald eyes suit the character of my face?"

Almeric was about to reply that her eyes were very beautiful, in order to console her for her loss of sight; but the mendicant was pitiless.

"Your eyes are very ugly," he said, in a harsh tone.

"Impossible!" the cat replied; "they must be most brilliant."

"Not at all," said the old man; "nothing is brilliant out of place. Take my advice: hide them; put on a pair of spectacles; and if ever you have emeralds you want to wear, make rings of them, and not eyes."

And the young stranger could not forbear laughing at this reflection.

On leaving the dining-hall, they entered a superb court, paved in mosaic, and surrounded with elegant columns.

In this place they observed a bird, whose plumage was that of a vulture, but whose timid manners bore very little the appearance of a bird of prey.

"There's a vulture now," said the mendicant, "that doesn't seem particularly wise. Who are you, old fellow?" he added, addressing the bird.

"I am a vulture, a bird of prey,—formerly a turkey-cock, a domestic bird. I wished to rise higher in the scale, and leave the old farmyard

behind, where contempt was current coin; but I repent having made the change: I can't make up my mind to devour them."

- "Whom?" cried Almeric,-"devour whom?"
- "Alas, those simple hens, who were always so kind and attentive to me."
- "Stupid!" cried the mendicant, "why did you change into a vulture?—better to be a turkey that is loved than a timid vulture."

And the young stranger could not forbear laughing at this reflection.

In one of the corners of the court there was a bear, seated on a bench, his head buried in his chest, and wrapped in deep meditation.

"Look at that fellow now," said the mendicant; "he doesn't give me at all the idea of knowing his trade of a bear any better than the rest. How came he into this palace? What sort of vanity could have induced him to adopt the profession of a bear? I warrant you he had a better one before."

The mendicant drew near the melancholy beast.

- "Bear," said he, "what were you before your metamorphosis?—before you were a bear, I mean?"
 - "I was an apothecary's boy."
- "An apothecary's boy!" repeated Almeric and the mendicant together.
- "Yes, a doctor's boy," answered the bear; but that position was a perfect laughing-stock. Mankind pursued me with irony; jeered at me in



"Stupid!" cried the mendicant, "why did you change into a vulture! better turkey that is loved than a timid vulture."

songs, laughed at me upon the stage. I wished to escape from it all; I became a bear: but I am bored to death; I was never intended for solitude."

"Donkey!" cried the mendicant in a rage; "why did you give up your old position? You might, at least, through its means have avenged yourself on men you hated; for you don't appear remarkably learned, and might have upset half the universe with your drugs and draughts."

The mendicant was still talking, when a gigantic elephant attracted his attention in the neigh-

bouring court.

"An elephant!" he exclaimed; "who could have wished to be changed into an elephant? What will you bet that he was not an ant before?"

And the young stranger could not forbear laughing at this reflection.

The old man, however, made a mistake; it was not an ant which had wished to be changed into an elephant, it was a rabbit. He had just obtained this immense favour, with which he was still puffed up.

He stalked heavily along with an important look, and received with an air of superiority the compliments which each addressed to him on his late promotion.

The mendicant, having learnt his story, went up to him in a familiar way.

"How d'ye do, little rabbit?" he said; "how do you find yourself in your great coat?"

The elephant was very shocked at this tone of levity; but being as yet unaccustomed to make use of his trunk, he did not think of resenting it.

"O, very well," he replied, "as you see;" and

the elephant strutted about proudly.

"Is it long since you have obtained this fa-

vour?" inquired the mendicant, maliciously.

- "No," the elephant replied; "only a few days: as an old rabbit, I had an undoubted right to it. After all, I am changed in nothing but my size: the colour of my coat is the same; my ears, instead of sticking up, now flap down; but that is all."
- "Stupid creature," thought the mendicant; "he does not even consider himself altered!"
- "But, my good fellow," Almeric in his turn inquired, for he was amused at the thorough simplicity of the rabbit, "won't your metamorphosis somewhat upset your usual habits?"
- "Well, now I think of it," replied the elephant, as if struck by the justice of the remark, "I have my misgivings whether it will not be rather trouble-some when I want to get back into my hole!"

This time it was impossible to help it, and the young stranger could not forbear laughing heartily at the reflection.

[&]quot;Would the gentlemen like to see the beautiful

woman?" asked the lackey who acted as their guide.

"Yes, most certainly," replied Almeric at once, "I must say I should like to see the beautiful woman; whereabouts is she?"

"This way, gentlemen; be kind enough to step into this boudoir."

They followed him into a charming little room, which was filled with looking-glass: the ceiling, the panels of the wall, formed as it were a single mirror, wherein you might admire yourself front-face, profile, three-quarters, and behind.

The beautiful woman was reclining on a sofa. But as soon as Almeric and the mendicant caught sight of her, they drew back with horror: this beautiful woman was, in fact, a monster; while she thought herself perfection.

Every portion of her was beautiful, and yet she herself was frightful; the reason being, that the exaggeration of all beauty composes a hideous whole: it is harmony which gives grace to the things that we admire; it is motion which gives life; but this beautiful woman had neither grace nor motion.

She was by nature pretty; but through the excess of her vanity and her affectation she had lost all her advantages: not content with being beautiful as nature had created her, she wished to be beautiful as beauty is depicted; she exaggerated all her advantages, and thus changed them into deformities.

She had wished for silky hair, and had obtained long silky hair without life or colour; she desired teeth of pearls, and her teeth looked positively dreadful; she longed for a waist tapering as a wasp's, and her body, drawn within a narrow girdle, was without grace or suppleness,—it seemed as though she would come in two at the slightest motion; she asked for hands of alabaster, and her hands became dull and cold; she wanted a child's foot, and that disproportioned foot, not being able to support her body, would not permit her to take a single step. Never had any thing so hideous met the eye before: it was ideal ugliness!

"A thousand centimes! how horrible the beautiful woman is!" cried the mendicant; "she would make my old woman attractive."

And the young stranger could not forbear laughing at this reflection.

It being now late, they offered the two strangers an apartment where they could pass the night.

"Any of these rooms would be better than an inn," thought Almeric, as they followed the valet, who conducted them into a magnificent bedchamber.

Exhausted with the fatigue of the day, Almeric hastened to undress, and to get into the splendid couch prepared for him.

But scarce had he lain down when he uttered the most piercing cries:

"O, it's horrible! I am half-flayed; I am in torture! What does it all mean? What unheard-

of cruelty!"—and a score of similar exclamations: and yet there was no great reason for this outburst; for he was making these complaints of a most beautiful piece of workmanship.

The clothes which covered the bed were of Indian muslin, embroidered with little gold spangles; I assure you it was the most charming thing imaginable: but he, who was only accustomed to plain linen sheets, could not appreciate the splendour. Time, my dear children, is required to habituate ourselves to the inconveniences of luxury.

Poor Almeric's feet were scratched all over; every fresh attempt he made to get out of bed only raised little pieces of his skin; his arms were bleeding with his exertions.

"Vanity of vanities!" he cried; "old man, mendicant, let us fly from here! There is no sleep to be had in palaces; and I want sleep."

The old man entered at his call.

"I was waiting for you, after the gold spangles," he said, smiling. "Well, what do you think of them? You must have slept gloriously in that splendid bed!"

"Let us go! let us fly!" said the young traveller, who was in no humour for a joke; "I don't wish to remain another hour in this place. The men are stupid; the women frightful; there are neither means of eating or sleeping properly; come, old man, let us be off."

Almeric, drawing on his clothes in great haste, took the old man by the shoulders, who was laugh-

ing all the time; and never left off pushing him till they both stood outside the palace-gates.

They then proceeded to the poor man's cottage.

"Sleep there," said the mendicant, as he pointed to his truckle-bed; "that mattress is favourable for rest: the golden spangles on my sheets will not prevent your sleeping, for I can boast neither sheets nor spangles;—what matters that?—it is sleep which makes good beds; and it is an appetite which makes good meals."

Almeric threw himself on the mendicant's mattress and fell asleep, murmuring shortly after in his dreams:

"There's an end to that notion. I thought of wishing for the embassy at Constantinople; but I shall remain a simple notary at Saint Quentin."

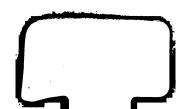
And the mendicant, in his turn, could not forbear smiling at this reflection.

THE END.

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